

THE
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*WESTMINSTER ABBEY: THE CENTRE OF
THE EMPIRE.*

WESTMINSTER ABBEY has been called 'the most lovely and lovable thing in Christendom,' and few Englishmen will be disposed to challenge the description. The singular beauty of the fabric may justify the first adjective, but the second points to other and less material excellences. Around the fabric has slowly grown a network of associations, and these have added a spiritual beauty, which arrests the notice and secures the affection of myriads whose eyes have never gazed on the fair church itself. Westminster Abbey has had an unparalleled history, in the course of which it has gained the 'loveliness' which now distinguishes it from all the churches in the world, and makes it uniquely fit to be the scene of a pageant the most interesting and solemn imaginable. The Coronation would not be the same thing in any other church. St. Paul's Cathedral, for example, would be a far more convenient building for such a function, and could accommodate without difficulty at least twice as many spectators as the Abbey can squeeze in at the cost of frightful disfigurement; but no one has even suggested that the ceremony should be transferred thither. It is felt instinctively that no amount of superiority in convenience and accommodation could atone for the loss of higher things which are inseparable from Westminster Abbey. It might, indeed, have been thought that these would have gradually lost their influence as the national life outgrew the simpler conditions of mediæval society, and became at once democratic and Imperial. It might have been argued, not without

plausibility, that this ancient church, which seems to express in its very structure the aristocratic spirit of feudalism, which is filled with the monuments of kings and nobles, and weighted with the traditions of a thousand years, would have fallen out of touch with the eager, various life of modern Englishmen.

As a matter of fact this has not been the case. The influence of Westminster Abbey, so far from growing weaker, steadily waxes as the Empire grows. Nor are the reasons of this altogether obscure. Westminster Abbey appeals with remarkable success to the deepest sentiments of English folk, sentiments which democratic institutions and Imperial expansion have on the whole tended to strengthen.

The expansion of the Empire has coincided with a deepened sense of national oneness and national, or, perhaps, to speak more truly, racial mission. Widely scattered over the world, building up new communities of English folk in lands which have no past, our people have clung with the more devotion to the historic symbol of national unity, and given an almost religious homage to the individuals in whom the mission of the race has found expression. Westminster Abbey matches with astonishing exactitude these Imperial dispositions. The Monarchy is there exhibited, not so much in its individual aspect, as in its historic greatness. The mind is not so much impressed by the particular character and fortune of this or that monarch, as by the imposing continuity of the line of sovereigns from a remote antiquity to the present time. Impressive memorials of the past may be found in many places, and they leave their mark on the mind; but they do not come home to us as living forces of the present, with which we ourselves are concerned. Westminster Abbey is unique in presenting the Monarchy to view as a continuous factor of the national life. There is the shrine of St. Edward, and there is the coronation chair of Edward I., ready for the use of Edward VII.; and the whole period of nearly eight and a-half centuries is no blank, but visibly embodied in a great series of royal tombs, any one of which would make the fame of a church, and which taken together present the most impressive spectacle of the kind in the world. It is one of the peculiarities of Westminster Abbey that it unites the coronations with the burials of the kings of England. The frailty of the individual and the strength of the institution are shown together. Poets and moralists have naturally fastened on the pathetic suggestiveness of this combination. It would be

easy to accumulate examples from our classic poets and divines, but we will confine ourselves to some lines from one whose antiquarian zeal placed all lovers of the Abbey under heavy obligations, and may be pleaded as an excuse for the pedantic detail of the verse, if not also for the triteness of the moral. Dart prefaces his 'Westmonasterium' with a lengthy poem, from which we cull the following lines, in which he addresses the monarchs as they come to be crowned. A certain interest attaches to his description of the ceremony :

Ye sons of Empire, who in pompous hour
Attend to wear the cumb'rous robes of pow'r;
When you proceed along the crowded way,
Think, there's a second visit still to pay:
Now purple pride and shouting joy appears;
Then black procession and attending tears.
And when in state on buried kings you tread,
And swelling robes sweep spreading o'er the dead;
While, like a god, you cast your eyes around,
Think then, O think! you walk on treach'rous ground.
Tho' firm the chequer'd pavement seems to be,
'Twill surely open and give way to thee.
And while the crowding Lords address them near,
Th' anointing prelate and the kneeling peer;
While with obsequious diligence they bow,
And spread the careful honours o'er thy brow:
While the high-rais'd spectators shout around,
And the long isles and vaulted roofs resound:
Then snatch a sudden thought, and turn thy head
From the loud living to the silent dead.

The antiquity of the nation, symbolised by a Monarchy which has continued through ages, appeals to the national imagination and stirs the national pride. Of all forms of human vanity, pride of ancestry is, perhaps, the most pardonable, and the monarchical sentiment is really pride of national ancestry. English folk, confronted by bustling modern communities, which are always rivals, and sometimes even successful rivals, in the competition of peoples, set store by a national past which distinguishes them honourably from the rest of the world. They are the aristocrats of Western civilisation. France has broken with its history, and forfeited its public dignity. The German Empire and the kingdom of Italy are creations of yesterday. England had been famous for centuries before an Emperor of Russia existed. The great Republic of the West is a late offshoot of England. The Monarchy is the outward and visible sign of English superiority over neigh-

bours and rivals in the matter of national ancestry. And this symbolic character is immensely enhanced by the fact that our sovereigns reign by a hereditary title. The deep family sentiment of the Teutonic race is enlisted on the side of the English Monarchy. Few of our oldest families trace their pedigree far into the Middle Ages; for the most part the peerage is very modern in origin; but the King comes of a family which was ancient when the Confessor was borne to his grave more than eight centuries ago. We instinctively revere lineage so exalted and so ancient. The King stands above the rest of Englishmen by a title of which the validity is obvious to everyone who has an ancestor to boast of. *His* family is coeval with England, and the most famous names in the national record are those of *his* ancestors. This fact also comes into prominence when the heir of so many kings enters Westminster Abbey to receive his crown amid the memorials of his kindred. The identification of the Monarchy with the nation is complete; and the loyalty which leaps into enthusiasm at a coronation is no unnatural or unworthy sentiment.

Sentiment allies itself with more prosaic considerations to exalt the Monarchy, and thereby to increase the veneration which Englishmen cherish for the famous church in which the Monarchy is illustrated and expressed. Political students are agreed that the last half-century has witnessed a remarkable resurrection of monarchical feeling throughout the Western world. It is scarcely excessive to say that civilised opinion has undergone a complete reversal in the course of a century. Kings were the objects of criticism a hundred years ago, and men speculated freely as to their final disappearance; now suspicion attaches mainly to democratic institutions, and the paralysis of Parliament is a familiar subject of popular comment. The Monarchy is certainly the most popular, perhaps also the strongest, of English political institutions. The faults of its rivals have contributed hardly less than its own merits to this fact. The disappointing results of republican systems on the Continent and, to some extent, in America have wonderfully chastened the logic of political philosophers, and the abstract arguments which fascinated our grandfathers sound in our ears a trifle absurd. After revolution and reform there has been a conservative reaction in favour of monarchy. In their dismay at the disintegrating tendencies of democracy, thoughtful citizens cling with the more ardour to the one political factor of

first-rate importance which seems to retain its vigour through all changes. However explicable, the fact is apparent. The sovereign draws to himself more popular regard as other political factors, once his rivals, lose their hold on the general confidence. Nor may we forget another influence which has worked powerfully towards the same result. For sixty-four years the Monarchy was represented by one who added to her public claim the attraction of a noble and virtuous character. It is impossible to over-estimate the services of Queen Victoria to the dynasty. Her immediate predecessors had created a dangerous breach between official duty and personal respect. Mr. Bagehot has well described the situation just before her accession :

The king is to be loved. But this theory requires, for a real efficiency, that the throne be filled by such a person as can be loved. In those times it was otherwise. The nominal possessor of the crown was an old man, whom an incurable malady had long sequestered from earthly things. The actual possessor of the royal authority was a voluntary of overgrown person, now too old for healthy pleasure, and half-sickened himself at the corrupt pursuits in which, nevertheless, he indulged perpetually. His domestic vices had become disgracefully public. Whatever might be the truth about Queen Caroline, no one could say she had been well treated. There was no loyalty on which suffering workers, or an angry middle class, could repose; all through the realm there was a miscellaneous agitation, a vague and wandering discontent.¹

The late Queen reconciled loyalty to the general conscience, and restored to the Monarchy its moral prestige. She did this at a time when the political utility and potential social worth of the Monarchy were being forced into prominence. Men perceived in the Throne not only the link of an expanding Empire, but also a force capable of arresting that vulgarising of social life which the sudden influx of wealth, inseparable from Imperial expansion, draws in its train. The process of expansion necessarily exalted the sovereign. As Parliaments are multiplied the dignity of the Mother of Parliaments steadily wanes; the only power which presses directly on all British subjects is the power of the Crown. The citizenship of the colonist takes inevitably the form of personal allegiance, and as the colonists vindicate for themselves a share in the government of the Empire, the Monarchy will be further exalted. Thus the sentiment of national pride, which fastens on the Monarchy as the visible symbol of national antiquity and renown, coalesces with the tendency of Imperial politics, and wonderfully strengthens it. In Westminster Abbey the colonist

¹ *Biographical Studies*, p. 46.

realises his political equality and vindicates his right to the national ancestry.

Westminster Abbey is the one English church which definitely and continuously enters into the national history. Canterbury Cathedral is its only conceivable rival in this respect; but apart from the circumstances of the national conversion and, perhaps, a few dramatic incidents, Canterbury Cathedral has no continuous contact with the general history of England. All our great churches are rich in historic reminiscences; but those reminiscences are local, diocesan, ecclesiastical, hardly ever national. The modern cathedral of St. Paul is acquiring a national character, and five hundred years hence, if it survives the subterranean activities which are said to endanger its security, it may perhaps exercise an influence akin to that of Westminster Abbey; but at present, and for years to come, St. Paul's will not be national in the deepest sense. Westminster Abbey lies outside the ecclesiastical system of the country; it is extra-diocesan. The dean has no superior save the sovereign himself, no bishop can enter of right within the Abbey precincts; and this unique ecclesiastical status reflects the unique character of the Abbey's influence. It is national history rather than ecclesiastical history that has written its record on the fabric and monuments of Westminster. The broad outlines of English history taught in the elementary schools throughout the Empire must direct the student's mind to Westminster Abbey. It is becoming a common thing to see little companies of schoolchildren led round the church by their teachers, who illustrate their lessons with the monuments, and find no more effectual and attractive way of teaching the national history. The spread of education among the masses has indefinitely widened the area of intelligent interest in all our ancient buildings, but in none so much as in Westminster Abbey. All the greatest names of English history are part of the tradition of the church, and the merest smattering of historical information makes Westminster interesting and intelligible.

And yet, when all is said, the root of the extraordinary influence which Westminster Abbey exercises is less political than religious. This great church has come to be the *Campo Santo* of the English race. For more than two centuries the notion has prevailed that distinguished public virtue ought to be remembered within its walls. The notion came from one whose

own merits the English people have been slow to recognise. Lord Clarendon records that Cromwell caused Admiral Blake to be buried with all possible solemnity in Henry VII's Chapel, among the monuments of the kings, 'to encourage his officers to venture their lives.' 'This,' observes Dean Stanley, 'is the first distinct claim of a burial in Westminster Abbey as an incentive to heroic achievements.' Blake was buried in 1657, and from that time the precedent set by the great Protector has been followed. The notion has appealed to the national imagination, and rooted itself in the public conscience. It cannot be doubted that this consecration of national service has wonderfully stimulated the sense of civic obligation. The honour of a place in Westminster Abbey is widely coveted, and its concession jealously watched. The interest in the church created by its character as the shrine of the national heroes in every sphere of worthy effort is profoundly religious. Many causes are operating for the decline of dogmatic conviction. Outside the ecclesiastical frontiers of Christendom are gathered a great multitude of men, doubtful of conventional creeds, but deeply conscious of social duty; impatient of religious systems, but zealous for righteousness. An orthodoxy of moral effort has silently established itself in the general mind, and a new calendar of saints has fixed itself in the public remembrance. Westminster Abbey satisfies that orthodoxy, and accepts that calendar. No church in the world is so nobly catholic. Every type of human service is represented within its walls. The alienating prejudices of common life have no recognition there. For admission to this home of greatness the 'one thing needful' is to be morally great. So here lie side by side political opponents, the advocates of rival causes, the apostles of divers creeds, men of action and men of thought, protagonists of faith and leaders of science, the liberators of the oppressed and the heroes of self-sacrifice—here they are accepted and held in perpetual honour. Westminster Abbey is the temple of the higher Imperialism; it preaches the mission of the English race.

And, with all this, Westminster Abbey is a great centre of Christian worship and teaching, and the wardship of this treasure-house of national monuments is vested in six English clergymen. Goldsmith represents his Citizen of the World as astonished that this should be the case. 'I always was of opinion,' he is made to say, 'that sepulchral honours of this kind should be considered as a national concern, and not trusted to the care of the priests of

any country, how respectable soever'; but in view of the facts there is no justification for the suspicions implied in these words, and it is unquestionable that the general sentiment of English people would be outraged by the proposal to secularise Westminster Abbey. Dean Stanley's eloquent vindication of his predecessors and himself expresses an ideal of administration which has become the settled tradition of Westminster :

It is not necessary to claim for the deans of Westminster any exemption from the ordinary infirmities of their profession, but the variety of the monuments, in country and in creed, as well as in taste and in politics, is a proof that the successive chiefs who have held the keys of St. Peter's Abbey have, on the whole, risen to the greatness of their situation, and have endeavoured to embrace within the wide sympathy of their consecrated precincts those whom a narrow and sectarian spirit might have excluded, but whom the precepts of their common Master, no less than the instincts of their common humanity should have bid them welcome.¹

The restored northern porch bears inscribed on it in eloquent symbol a conception of Christianity which is winning the acceptance of thoughtful men in all the denominations, and which not only tolerates but requires the generous catholicity which is the Westminster tradition. The Incarnation is pictured in the Virgin Mother with her Divine Child below, and above in the reigning Christ; and the historic effect of the Incarnation in drawing out to their noblest expressions all the manifold powers of humanity is shown in the homage offered to the Son of Man by all the elements of civilisation.

Moreover, it is to be noted that Westminster Abbey holds a remarkable place in the religious history of the English race. The doctrinal standard of the Presbyterian Churches was compiled within its walls, and bears its name. The Abbey is one of the holy places of non-Episcopalian Christianity, as well as a famous Anglican church. The most potent religious factor in the English-speaking world is the English Bible, and Westminster Abbey is inseparably united with its history also. The preface of the Revised Version is dated from Jerusalem Chamber, and in that famous room the great work was carried through. And that work was a combined effort of English-speaking Christians, a proof of the practical effectiveness of religious co-operation, and a prophecy of the religious unity of English folk. Wherever the Bible is studied and valued a fresh stream of interest sets towards West-

¹ *Memorials of Westminster*, p. 353.

minster Abbey. It is, far more than Canterbury, the mother church of English Christendom.

Combine all these distinctive elements of popular interest, and the singular fitness of Westminster Abbey to be the scene of a great Imperial pageant becomes evident. It is the centre of the British Empire, the Mecca of the English race. The Coronation is a more solemn and impressive event for taking place within its walls. Monarchical sentiment is cleansed and raised by religion. Imperialism is abashed and commissioned by the sense of responsibility. The conscience of Empire utters itself in presence of 'famous men and our fathers that begat us.' In that home of history the noblest traditions of the past authenticate the worthiest efforts of the present, and inspire the loftiest hopes of the future. The vulgarity of success and the insolence of power die away before the pathos of greatness and the spiritual beauty of service. The Coronation ceases to be an Old-World pageant for curious eyes to gaze on, and becomes pre-eminently religious. The old Eucharistic cry wakes an echo in every English heart. '*Sursum corda.*' The mission of the race is best expressed in terms of worship. '*Habemus ad Dominum.*'

H. HENSLEY HENSON.

*THE INTRUSIONS OF PEGGY.*¹

BY ANTHONY HOPE.

CHAPTER XIV.

A HOUSE OF REFUGE.

PEGGY RYLE was alone in lodgings in Harriet Street, near Covent Garden. Elfreda Flood had gone on tour, having obtained a part rich in possibilities, at a salary sufficient for necessities. Under conditions that lacked both these attractions, Horace Harnack had joined the same company; so that, according to Miles Chilwick, the worst was expected. Considering the paucity of amusement and the multitude of churches in provincial cities, what else could be looked for from artistic and impressionable minds? At this time Miles was affecting a tone about marriage which gave Mrs. John Maturin valuable hints for her new pessimistic novel.

The lodgings wavered between being downright honest lodgings and setting up to be a flat—this latter on the strength of being shut off from the rest of the mansion (the word found authority in the 'To let' notices outside) by a red-baize door with a bolt that did not act. This frail barrier passed, you came to Elfreda's room first, then, across the passage, to the sitting-room, then to Peggy's on the right again. There were cupboards where cooking was done and the charwoman abode by day, and where you could throw away what you did not want and thought your partner could not; mistakes sometimes occurred and had to be atoned for by the surrender of articles vitally indispensable to the erring party.

Needless to say, the lodgings were just now the scene of boundless hospitality; it would have been sumptuous also but for the charwoman's immutable and not altogether unfounded belief that Peggy was ruining herself. The charwoman always forgot the luxuries; as the guests never believed in them, no harm was done. Peggy flitted in and out to change her frock, seldom settling down in her home till twelve or one o'clock at night. She was in a state of rare contentment, an accretion to the gaiety

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that was hers by nature. Somehow perplexities had disappeared ; they used to be rather rife, for she had a vivid imagination, apt to pick out the attractions of any prospect or any individual, capable of presenting its owner as enjoying exceeding happiness with any person and in any station of life, and thus of producing impulses which had occasionally resulted in the perplexities that were now—somehow—a matter of the past. The change of mood dated from the day when Peggy had made her discovery about Airey Newton and given her word of honour to Tommy Trent ; it was nursed in the deepest secrecy, its sole overt effect being to enable Peggy to receive any amount of attention with frank and entirely unperturbed gratitude. If she were misunderstood—But there must really be an end of the idea that we are bound to regulate our conduct by the brains of the stupidest man in the room. ‘And they have the fun of it,’ Peggy used to reflect, in much charity with herself and all men.

That night, in Lady Blixworth’s conservatory, she had refused the hand of Mr. Stapleton-Staines (son of that Sir Stapleton who had an estate bordering on Barslett, and had agreed with Lord Barmouth that you could not touch pitch without being defiled), and she drove home with hardly a regret at having thrown away the prospect of being a county gentlewoman. She was no more than wondering gently if there were any attractions at all about the life. She had also the feeling of a good evening’s work, not disturbed in the least degree by the expression of Lady Blixworth’s face when she and Mr. Staines parted at the door of the conservatory, and Mr. Staines took scowling leave of his hostess. She lay back in her cab, smiling at the world.

On her doorstep sat two gentlemen in opera hats and long brown coats. They were yawning enormously, and had long ceased any effort at conversation. They had the street to themselves save for a draggled-looking woman who wandered aimlessly about on the other side of the road, a policeman, who seemed to have his eye on the woman and on them alternately, and a wagon laden with vegetables that ground its way along to the market. Peggy’s hansom drove up. The two men jumped joyfully to their feet and assumed expressions of intense disgust ; the policeman found something new to watch ; the draggled woman turned her head towards the house and stood looking on.

‘Punctual as usual !’ said Miles Childwick encouragingly.
‘Eleven to the moment !’

The clock of St. Paul's, Covent Garden, struck 12.30.

'Here's the key,' said Peggy helpfully. 'Have you half a crown, Tommy?'

'I have a florin, and it's three-quarters of a mile.'

Peggy looked defiant for a minute; then she gave a funny little laugh. 'All right,' said she.

They went in. The policeman yawned and resumed his stroll; the woman, after a moment's hesitation, walked slowly round the corner and down towards the Strand.

Arrived upstairs, Peggy darted at the table; a telegram lay there. She tore it open.

'They've done it!' she cried exultantly.

'What church?' asked Chilwick resignedly.

'I mean they're engaged.'

'When?' inquired Tommy, who was busy with soda-water.

'6.45,' answered Peggy, consulting the stamp on the telegram.

'They might have waited till the hour struck,' remarked Chilwick in a disgusted tone.

'Isn't it splendid?' insisted Peggy.

'You say something proper, Tommy, old boy.' Chilwick was ostentatiously overcome.

'Is it a—an enthusiastic telegram?' asked Tommy, after a drink.

'No. She only says they're the happiest people in the world.'

'If it's no worse than that, we can sit down to supper.' Mr. Chilwick proceeded to do so immediately.

'I ordered lobsters,' said Peggy, as she threw her cloak away and appeared resplendent in her best white frock.

'The mutton's here all right,' Chilwick assured her. 'And there's a good bit left.'

'What that pair propose to live on——' began Tommy, as he cut the loaf.

'The diet is entirely within the discretion of the Relieving Officer,' interrupted Chilwick.

'I'm so glad she's done it while I've got some money left. Shall I give her a bracelet or a necklace, or—could I give her a tiara, Tommy?'

'A tiara or two, I should say,' smiled Tommy.

'It's awfully hot!' Peggy rose, pulled up the blind, and flung the window open. 'Let's drink their health. Hurrah!'

Their shouts made the policeman smile, and caused the woman,

who, having gone down round the west corner, had come up again and turned into the street from the east, to look up to the lights in the window ; then she leant against the railings opposite and watched the lights. The policeman, after a moment's consideration, began to walk towards her very slowly, obviously desiring it to be understood that he was not thereby committed to any definite action ; he would approach a crowd on the pavement, having some invisible centre of disturbance or interest, with the same strictly provisional air.

‘ And how was our friend Lady Blixworth ? ’ asked Tommy.

‘ She looked tired, and said she’d been taking Audrey Pollington about. She’s the most treacherous accomplice I know.’

‘ She’s like Miles here. Nothing’s sacred if a good gibe’s possible.’

‘ Nothing ought to be sacred at which a good gibe—a good one—is possible,’ Chilwick maintained.

‘ Oh, I only meant something smart,’ explained Tommy contemptuously.

‘ Then don’t deviate into careless compliment. It causes unnecessary conversation, and the mutton is far from bad, though not far from being finished.’

‘ If only the lobsters—’ began Peggy plaintively.

‘ I do not believe in the lobsters,’ said Chilwick firmly.

‘ Then she asked me after Trix Trevalla— Why, there’s a knock ! ’

It was true. The policeman had at last approached the woman with a step that spoke of a formed decision. To his surprise she suddenly exclaimed in an impatient voice, ‘ Oh, well, if they’re going to stay all night, I can’t wait,’ and crossed the road. He followed her to the doorstep.

‘ This isn’t where you live,’ he said, as though kindness suggested the information.

‘ No, it isn’t,’ she agreed.

‘ Come now, where do you live ? ’

‘ I don’t know,’ she answered, seeming puzzled and tired. ‘ My flat’s let, you see.’

‘ Oh, is it ? ’ Sarcasm became predominant in the policeman’s voice. ‘ Taken it for the Maharaejer of Kopang, have they ? ’ A prince bearing that title was a visitor to London at this time, and was creating considerable interest.

‘ Nonsense ! ’ said she with asperity, and she knocked, adding, ‘ I know the lady who lives up there.’

'There's a woman on the doorstep—and a policeman!' cried Peggy to her companions; she had run to the window and put her head out.

'Now, Tommy, which has come for you and which for me?' asked Childwick.

'Stay where you are,' said Peggy. 'I'll go down and see.'

In spite of Tommy's protests—Childwick made none—she insisted on going alone. The fact is that she had two or three friends who were habitually in very low water; it was just possible that this might be one who was stranded altogether.

The men waited; they heard voices below, they heard the hall-door shut, there were steps on the stairs, the red-baize door swung on its hinges.

'She's brought her up,' said Childwick. 'Where are our hats, Tommy?'

'Wait a bit, we may be wanted,' suggested Tommy.

'That's why I proposed to go,' murmured Childwick.

'Rot, old fellow,' was Tommy's reception of this affected discretion. He went to the window and craned his neck out. 'The policeman's gone,' he announced with some relief. 'That's all right anyhow!'

'All right? Our only protection gone! Mark you, Tommy, we're in luck if we don't have our pictures in a philanthropic publication over this.'

'Where have they gone? Into one of the bedrooms, I suppose.'

The door opened and Peggy ran in. Her eyes were wide with astonishment; excitement was evident in her manner; there was a stain of mud on the skirt of her best white frock.

'The whisky!' she gasped, clutched it, and fled out again.

'Now we know the worst,' said Miles, turning his empty glass upside down.

'Don't be a fool, Miles,' suggested Tommy, a little impatiently.

'I'll stop as soon as there's anything else to do,' retorted Miles tranquilly.

Peggy reappeared with the whisky. She set it down on the table and spoke to them.

'I want you both to go now and to say nothing.'

They glanced at one another and turned to their coats. In unbroken silence they put them on, took their hats, and held out

their hands to Peggy. She began to laugh ; there were tears in her eyes.

‘ You may say good-night,’ she told them.

‘ Good-night, Peggy.’

‘ Good-night, Peggy.’

‘ Good-night—and I should like to kiss you both,’ said Peggy Ryle. ‘ You’re not to say anybody came, you know.’

They nodded, and went into the passage.

‘ I shall come and see you soon,’ Peggy told Tommy Trent, as she shut the baize door behind them. Then she turned into Elfreda’s room. ‘ Come and have some supper now,’ she said.

Trix Trevalla caught her by the hands and kissed her. ‘ You look so pretty and so happy, dear,’ she sighed ; ‘ and I’m such a guy ! ’

The term hardly described her pale strained face, feverishly bright eyes, and the tangle of brown hair that hung in disorderly masses round her brow. She had thrown off her wet jacket and skirt, and put on a tea-gown of Elfreda Flood’s ; her feet were in the same lady’s second-best slippers. Peggy led her into the sitting-room and made her eat.

‘ I didn’t tell them who you were. And anyhow they wouldn’t say anything,’ she assured the wanderer.

‘ Well, who am I ? ’ asked Trix. ‘ I hardly know. I know who I was before dinner, but who am I now ? ’

‘ Tell me about it.’

‘ I can’t. I ran away. I think I knocked Lord Barmouth down. Then I ran to the station—I knew there was a train. Just by chance I put on the skirt that had my purse in it, or—No, I’d never have gone back. And I got to London. I went to my flat. At the door I remembered it was let. Then—then, Peggy, I went to Danes Inn.’ She looked up at Peggy with a puzzled glance, as though asking why she had gone to Danes Inn. ‘ But he was out—at least there was no answer—and the porter had followed me and was waiting at the foot of the stairs. So I came down. I told him I was Airey Newton’s sister, but he didn’t believe me.’ She broke into a weak laugh. ‘ So I came here, and waited till you came. But those men were here, so I waited till—till I couldn’t wait any longer.’ She lay back exhausted in her chair. ‘ May I stay to-night ? ’ she asked.

‘ It’s so lucky Elfreda’s away. There’s a whole room for you ! ’ said Peggy. She got a low chair and sat down by Trix. But

Trix sprang suddenly to her feet in a new spasm of nervous excitement that made her weariness forgotten. Peggy watched her, a little afraid, half-sorry that she had not bidden Tommy Trent wait outside the baize door.

'Oh, that time at Barslett!' cried Trix Trevalla, flinging out her hands. 'The torture of it! And I told them all lies, nothing but lies! They were turning me into one great lie. I told lies to the man I was going to marry—this very night I told him a lie. And I didn't dare to confess. So I ran away. I ran for my life—literally for my life, I think.'

This sort of thing was quite new to Peggy, as new to her as to the Barmouths, though in a different way.

'Weren't they kind to you?' she asked wonderingly. It was strange that this was the woman who had made the great triumph, whom all the other women were envying.

Trix took no notice of her simple question.

'I'm beaten,' she said. 'It's all too hard for me. I thought I could do it—I can't!' She turned on Peggy almost fiercely. 'I've myself to thank for it. There's hardly anybody I haven't treated badly; there's been nobody I really cared about. Beaufort Chance, Mrs. Bonfill, the Frickers—yes, Mortimer too—they were all to do something for me. Look what they've done! Look where I am now!'

She threw herself into a chair, and sat there silent for a minute. Peggy rose quietly, shut the window, and drew the curtains.

'They all believed in me in their way,' Trix went on, more quietly, more drearily. 'They thought I should do my part of the bargain, that I should play fair. The bargains weren't a good sort, and I didn't even play fair. So here I am!'

Her desolation struck Peggy to the heart, but it seemed too vast for any demonstration of affection or efforts at consolation; Trix would not want to be kissed while she was dissecting her own soul.

'That's what Fricker meant by the letter he wrote me. He's a swindler. So was I. He didn't swindle me till I swindled him. I lied to him just as I lied to Mortimer—just in the same way.'

'Do go to bed, dear. You'll be able to tell me better tomorrow.'

'I know now,' Trix went on, holding her head between her hands, 'I know now why I went to Danes Inn. I remember now.

It came into my head in the train—as I stared at an old man who thought I was mad. It was because he made me think I could do all that, and treat people and the world like that.'

'Airey did ?'

'Perhaps he didn't mean to, but it sounded like that to me. I had had such a life of it; nobody had ever given me a chance. He seemed to tell me to have my chance, to take my turn. So I did. I didn't care about any of them. I was having my turn, that's all. It's very horrible, very horrible. And after it all here I am ! But that's why I went to Danes Inn.' She broke off and burst into a feeble laugh. 'You should have seen Lord Barmouth, with his shawl and his lantern and his spud ! I believe I knocked him down.' She sprang up again and listened to the clock that struck two. 'I wonder what Mortimer is doing !' She stood stock-still, a terror on her face. 'Will they come after me ?'

'They won't think of coming here,' Peggy assured her soothingly.

'It's all over now, you know, absolutely,' said Trix. 'But I daren't face them. I daren't see any of them. I should like never to see anything of them again. They're things to forget. Oh, my life seems to have been nothing but things to forget ! And to-night I remember them all, so clearly, every bit of them. I wanted something different, and it's turned out just the same.' She came quickly up to Peggy and implored her, 'Will you hide me here for a little while ?'

'As long as you like. Nobody will come here.' The contrast between the gay, confident, high-couraged Trix Trevalla she had known and this broken creature seemed terrible to Peggy.

'I came here because——' A sort of puzzle fell upon her again.

'Of course you did. We're friends,' said Peggy, and now she kissed her. All that Trix was saying might be dark and strange, but her coming was natural enough in Peggy's eyes.

'Yes, that's why I came,' cried Trix, eagerly snatching at the word. 'Because we're friends. You're friends, you and all of you. You're not trying to get anything, you'd give anything—you, and Mr. Trent, and Airey Newton.'

Airey's name gave Peggy a little pang. She said nothing, but her smile was sad.

'And at Barslett I thought of you all—most of you yourself. Somehow you seemed to me the only pleasant thing there was in

the world ; and I was so far—so far away from you.' She lowered her voice suddenly to a cautious whisper. 'I must tell you something, but promise me to repeat it to nobody. Promise me.'

'Of course I promise,' said Peggy readily.

'I think I'm ruined,' whispered Trix. 'I think Fricker has ruined me. That's what I didn't dare tell Mortimer. I had a letter from Fricker, but I've lost it, I think, or left it somewhere. Or did I tear it up? As far as I could understand it, it looked as if he'd ruined me. When I've paid all I have to pay I think I shall have hardly any money at all, Peggy. You promise not to tell?'

Peggy was more in her element now ; her smile grew much brighter.

'Yes, I promise, and you needn't bother about that. It doesn't matter a bit. And, besides, I've got lots of money. Airey's got a heap of money of mine.'

'Airey Newton?' She stood silent a moment, frowning, as though she were thinking of him or of what his name brought into her mind. But in the end she only said again, 'Yes, I think I must be ruined too.'

It was evident that Peggy could comfort her on that score hardly more than with regard to the troubles that were strange and mysterious. Indeed Peggy was almost at her limit of endurance.

'If you're miserable any longer, and don't go quietly to bed, I think I shall begin to cry and never stop,' she declared in serious warning.

'Have I said a great deal?' asked Trix wearily. 'I'm sorry ; I had to say it to someone. It was burning me up inside, you know.'

'You will come to bed?' Peggy entreated.

'Yes, I'll come to bed. I've got nothing, you know. I must have left everything there.'

This problem again was familiar ; Peggy assured her that there would be no trouble. A rather hysterical smile came on Trix's lips.

'They'll find all my things in the morning,' she said. 'And Lord Barmouth will tell them how I knocked him down ! And Mrs. Bonfill ! And Lady Barmouth !'

'It would be rather fun to be there,' suggested Peggy, readily advancing to the brink of mirth.

'And Mortimer!'

Peggy looked at her curiously and risked the question:—

'Did you care at all for him?'

'I can't care for anybody—anybody,' moaned Trix despairingly. She stretched out her arms. 'Can you teach me, Peggy?'

'You poor old dear, come to bed,' said Peggy.

Peggy herself was not much for bed that night. After she had seen Trix between the sheets, and dropping off to sleep in exhaustion, she put on a dressing-gown and came back to her favourite chair. Here she sat herself Turkwise, and abandoned the remaining hour of darkness to reflection and cigarettes. She was to become, it seemed, a spectator of odd things, a repository of secrets; she was to behold strange scenes in the world's comedy. It was by no seeking of hers; she had but gone about enjoying herself, and all this came to her; she did but give of her abundance of happiness, and they brought to her trouble in exchange. Was that, too, the way of the world? Peggy did not complain. No consciousness marred her beneficence; she never supposed that she was doing or could do good. And it was all interesting. She pictured Barslett in its consternation, and a delighted triumph rose in her; she would fight Barslett, if need be, for Trix Trevalla. For the present it was enough to laugh at abandoned Barslett, and she paid it that tribute heartily.

Yes, there were her secrets, both guarded by pledges of honour! Trix was ruined, and Airey Newton was—what he must be declared to be. The thought of the two made connection in her mind. Trix had given her the link that held them together; if what Trix had told were true, Airey Newton had much to say to this night's episode, to all that had happened at Barslett and before, to the ruin and despair.

'All that sounds rather absurd,' murmured Peggy critically, 'but I'm beginning to think that that's no reason against things being true.'

Because things all round were rather absurd—Elfreda and Horace Harnack there at Norwich, Airey Newton hugging gold, Barslett aghast, Mortimer Mervyn forsaken, brilliant Trix beaten, battered, ruined, a fugitive seeking a house of refuge—and seeking it with her. Was there no thread to this labyrinth? Peggy might have the clue in her heart; she had it not in her head.

Dawn peeped through the curtains, and she tore the hanging folds away that she might greet its coming and welcome the

beauty of it. As she stood looking, her old confident faith that joy cometh in the morning rose in her. Presently she turned away with a merry laugh, and, shrugging her shoulders at Nature's grandmotherly ways, at last drove herself to bed at hard on five o'clock. There was no sound from Trix Trevalla's room when she listened on the way.

Her night was short; eight o'clock found her in the market, buying flowers, flowers, flowers; the room was to be a garden for Trix to-day, and money flew thousand-winged from Peggy's purse. She had just dealt forth her last half-sovereign when she turned to find Tommy Trent at her elbow; he too was laden with roses.

'Oh!' exclaimed Peggy, rather startled, and blushing a little, looking down, too, at her unceremonious morning attire.

'Ah!' said Tommy, pointing at her flowers and shaking his head.

'Well, you've got some too.'

'I was going to leave them for you—just in acknowledgment of the lobsters. What have you bought those for?'

'They're for her,' said Peggy. 'I shall like to have yours for myself.'

'Nobody ever needed them less, but I'll bring them round,' said he.

They walked together to her door. Then Tommy said:—

'Well, you can tell me?'

'I can tell you part of it—not all,' said Peggy.

'Who is she, then?'

'Nobody else is to know.' She whispered to him: 'Trix Trevalla!'

Tommy considered a moment. Then he remarked:—

'You'll probably find that you've got to send for me.'

Peggy raised her brows and looked at him derisively. He returned her gaze placidly, with a pleasant smile. Peggy laughed gently.

'If Mrs. Trevalla is so foolish, I don't mind,' she said.

Tommy strolled off very happy. 'The thing moves, I think,' he mused as he went his way. For the more love she had for others, the more and the better might she some day give to him. It is a treasure that grows by spending: such was his reflection, and it seems but fair to record it, since so many instances of a different trend of thought have been exhibited.

CHAPTER XV.

NOT EVERYBODY'S FOOTBALL.

LORD BARMOUTH was incapable of speaking of it—incapable. He said so, and honestly believed himself. Indeed it is possible that under less practised hands he would have revealed nothing. Lady Blixworth, cordially agreeing that the less said the better, extracted a tolerably full account of the whole affair.

‘She did, she actually did,’ he assured her, as though trying to overcome an inevitable incredulity. ‘I was standing in the middle of the path, and she’—he paused, seeking a word—something to convey the monstrous fact.

‘Shoved you off it?’ suggested Lady Blixworth, in no difficulty for the necessary word.

‘She pushed me violently aside. I all but fell!’

‘Then she scuttled off?’

This time he accepted the description. ‘Exactly what she did—exactly. I can describe it in no other way. She must have been mad!’

‘What can have driven her mad at Barslett?’ asked his friend innocently.

‘Nothing. We were kindness itself. Her troubles were not due to her visit to us. We made her absolutely one of the family.’

‘You tried, you mean,’ she suggested.

‘Precisely. We tried—with what success you see. It is heart-breaking—heart—’

‘And what did Mortimer say?’

‘I didn’t tell him till the next morning. I can’t dwell on the scene. He ran to her room himself; I followed. It was in gross disorder.’

‘No!’

‘I assure you, yes. There was no letter, no word for him. Presently his mother prevailed on him to withdraw.’

‘It must have been a shock.’

‘I prefer to leave it undescribed. Nobody could attempt to comfort him but our good Sarah Bonfill.’

‘Ah, dearest Sarah has a wonderful way!’

‘As the day wore on, she induced him to discuss the Trans-

Euphratic Railway scheme, in which he is greatly interested. He will be a long while recovering.'

Repressing her inclination to seize an obvious opening for a flippant question, Lady Blixworth gazed sympathetically at the afflicted father.

'And your poor wife?' she asked in gentle tones.

'A collapse—nothing less than a collapse, Viola. The deception that Mrs. Trevalla practised—well, I won't say a word. I had come to like her, and it is too painful—too painful. But there is no doubt that she wilfully deceived us on at least two occasions. The first we forgave freely and frankly; we treated it as if it had never been. The second time was on that evening itself; she misrepresented the result of certain business matters in which she had engaged—'

'And ran away to avoid being found out?' guessed Lady Blixworth.

'I think—I may say, I hope—that she was for the time not responsible for her actions.'

'Where is she now?'

'I have no information. We don't desire to know. We have done with her.'

'Does Mortimer feel like that too?'

'Don't do him the injustice—the injustice, Viola—of supposing anything else. He knows what is due to himself. Fortunately the acute position of public affairs is a distraction.'

'Do tell him to come here. We shall be so glad to see him, Audrey and I. She admires him so much, you know, and I—well, I've known him since he was a boy. Does Sarah know nothing more about Trix's reasons for behaving in such a fashion?'

'In Sarah's opinion Mrs. Trevalla has ruined herself by speculation.'

Lady Blixworth was startled from artifice by the rapture of finding her suspicions justified.

'Fricker!' she exclaimed triumphantly.

'There is every reason to believe so—every reason.' There was at least one very good one—namely that Mrs. Bonfill had pieced together Mr. Fricker's letter, read it, and communicated the contents to Lady Barmouth. Lord Barmouth saw no need to be explicit about this; he had refused to read the letter himself,

or to let Mrs. Bonfill speak to him about it. It is, however, difficult for a man not to listen to his wife.

'Well, you never were enthusiastic about the match, were you?'

'She wasn't quite one of us, but I had come to like her.' He paused, and then, after a struggle, broke out candidly, 'I feel sorry for her, Viola.'

'It does you credit,' said Lady Blixworth, and she really thought it did.

'In a sense she is to be pitied. It is inevitable that a man like Mortimer should require much from the woman who is to be his wife. It is inevitable. She couldn't reach his standard.'

'Nor yours.'

'Our standard for him is very high, very high.' He sighed. 'But I'm sorry for her.'

'What does Sarah say?'

Lord Barmouth looked a little puzzled. He leant forward and observed confidentially, 'It seems to me, Viola, that women of high principle occasionally develop a certain severity of judgment—I call it a severity.'

'So do I,' nodded Lady Blixworth heartily.

Barmouth passed rapidly from the dangers of such criticism.

'It is probably essential in the interests of society,' he added, with a return of dignity.

'Oh, probably,' she conceded, with a carelessness appropriate to the subject. 'Do you think there's another man?'

'I beg your pardon, Viola?' He was obviously astonished, and inclined to be offended.

'Any man she liked or had liked, you know.'

'She was engaged to my son.'

That certainly sounded final, but Lady Blixworth was not abashed.

'An engagement is just what brings the idea of the other man back sometimes,' she observed.

'We have no reason to suspect it in this case. I will not suspect it without definite grounds. In spite of everything let us be just.'

Lady Blixworth agreed to be just, with a rather weary air. 'Do give my best love to dear Lady Barmouth, and do send Mortimer to see me,' she implored her distressed visitor, when he took his leave.

The coast was clear. If she knew anything of the heart of man—as she conceived she did—the juncture of affairs was not unfavourable; ill-used lovers may sometimes be induced to seek softer distractions than Trans-Euphratic or other railways. She telegraphed to Audrey Pollington to cut short a visit which she was paying in the country. At any rate Audrey would not have ruined herself nor run away. In a spirit not over-complimentary either to Audrey or to Barslett, Lady Blixworth decided that they would just suit one another.

‘The marriage arranged, &c., will not take place.’ When a lady disappears by night, and sends no communication save a telegram, giving no address and asking that her luggage may be consigned to Charing Cross station, ‘to be called for,’ it is surely justifiable to insert that curt intimation of happiness frustrated or ruin escaped; the doubt in which light to look at it must be excused, since it represents faithfully the state of Mervyn’s mind. He still remembered Trix as he had thought her, still had visions of her as what he had meant her to become; with the actual Trix of fact he was naturally in a fury of outraged self-esteem.

‘I would have forgiven her,’ he told Mrs. Bonfill, not realising at all that this ceremony or process was the very thing which Trix had been unable to face. ‘In a little while we might have forgotten it, if she had shown proper feeling.’

‘She’s the greatest disappointment I ever had in my life,’ declared Mrs. Bonfill. ‘Not excepting even Beaufort Chance! I needn’t say that I wash my hands of her, Mortimer.’ Mrs. Bonfill was very sore; people would take advantage of Trix’s escapade to question the social infallibility of her sponsor.

‘We have no alternative,’ he agreed gloomily.

‘You mustn’t think any more about her; you have your career.’

‘I hate the gossip,’ he broke out fretfully.

‘If you say nothing, it will die away. For the moment it is unavoidable—you are so conspicuous.’

‘I shall fulfil all my engagements as if nothing had happened.’

‘Much the best way,’ she agreed, recognising a stolid courage about him which commanded some admiration. He was facing what he hated most in the world—ridicule; he was forced to realise one of the things that a man least likes to realise—that he has failed to manage a woman whom he has undertaken to

manage. No eccentricities of sin or folly in her, no repeated failures to find anything amiss in himself, can take away the sting.

'I cannot blame myself,' he said more than once to Mrs. Bonfill; but the conviction of his blamelessness yielded no comfort.

She understood his feeling, and argued against it; but it remained with him still, in spite of all she could say. He had always been satisfied with himself; he was very ill-satisfied now. Some malicious spirit in himself seemed to join in the chorus of ill-natured laughter from outside, which his pride and sensitiveness conjured to his ears. Beaufort Chance had walked the streets once, fearing the whispers of passers-by saying that he had been proved a rogue. Mervyn walked them, and sat in his place in the House, imagining that the whispers said that he had been made a fool. But he faced all. Barslett bred courage, if not brilliancy; he faced even Beaufort Chance, who sat below the Gangway, and screwed round on him a vicious smile the first time he appeared after the announcement.

On the whole he behaved well, but he had not even that glimmer of pity for Trix which had shone through his father's horrified pompousness. The movements of her mind remained an utter blank to him; why she had lied, an unsolved mystery. Amidst all his humiliation and his anger, he thanked heaven that such a woman would never now be mistress of Barslett; the affair constituted a terrible warning against experiments in marriage. If the question arose again—and in view of Barslett it must—he would follow the beaten track. In the bottom of his heart—though he confessed it to nobody, no, not to his parents nor to Mrs. Bonfill—he had something of the feeling of an ordinarily sober and straitlaced young man who has been beguiled into 'making a night of it' with rowdy companions, and in the morning hours undergoes the consequences of his unwonted outbreak: his head aches, he is exposed to irreverent comment, he is heartily determined to forswear such courses. Mervyn did not dream of seeking Trix, or of offering an amnesty. To his mind there was no alternative; he washed his hands of her, like Mrs. Bonfill.

Society took its cue from these authoritative examples, and was rather in a hurry to declare its attitude. It shows in such cases something of the timidity and prudery of people who are themselves not entirely proof against criticism, and are conse-

quently much afraid of the *noscitur a sociis* test being applied to them. Even in moral matters it displays this readiness to take alarm, this anxiety to vindicate itself; much more so, of course, in the case of conduct which it terms, with vague but unmeasured reprobation, 'impossible.' Trix's behaviour had been 'impossible' in the highest degree, and there could be but one sentence. Yet, though society was eager to dissociate itself from such proceedings, it was not eager to stop talking about them; its curiosity and its desire to learn the whole truth were insatiable. Trix was banned; her particular friends became very popular. Lady Blixworth held *levées* of women who wanted to know. Peggy Ryle's appearances were greeted with enthusiasm. Where was Mrs. Trevalla? How was Mrs. Trevalla? Who (this was an after-thought, coming very late in the day, but demanded by the facts of the case) was Mrs. Trevalla after all? And, of course, the truth had yet to be told? Society held the cheerful conviction that it by no means knew the worst.

Any knowledge Lady Blixworth had she professed to be at the disposal of her callers; she chose to give it in a form most calculated to puzzle and least likely to satisfy. 'There was a difference, but not amounting to a quarrel.' 'So far as we know, she has not left London.' 'She was certainly alone when she started from Barslett.' Utterances like these wasted the time of the inquirers and beguiled Lady Blixworth's. 'I'm going to stay with them soon,' she would add, 'but probably anything I may hear will be in confidence.' Such a remark as that was actively annoying. 'Oh, Audrey goes with me, yes,' might be a starting-point for conjecture as to the future, but threw no light on the elusive past. More than one lady was heard to declare that she considered Lady Blixworth an exasperating woman.

Peggy's serene silence served as well as these ingenious speeches. With an audacious truthfulness, which only her popularity with men made it safe to employ, she told the affronted world that she knew everything, but could say nothing. An assertion usually considered to be but a transparent and impudent mask of ignorance compelled unwilling belief when it came from her lips; but surely she could not persist in such an attitude? It cut at the roots of social intercourse. Peggy was incessantly abused and incessantly invited. She had frocks now to respond to every call, and at every call she came. She went even to houses which she had shown no anxiety to frequent before, and

which seemed to offer the reward neither of pleasure nor of prestige for going.

'That child is up to something,' opined Lady Blixworth, after a week or two of this; and one day, at her own house, she kept Peggy back and took her firmly by the shoulders.

'What is it you want?' she asked squarely. 'Why have you been going to the Moresby-Jenkins's and the Eli-Simpkinsons', and places of that sort?'

Peggy looked at her with a shrewd kindness, weighing the advantages of still more candour.

'I want to meet Mr. Fricker,' she confessed at last.

'That means you're in communication with Trix?' An inspiration came upon her. 'Heavens, I believe she's living with you!'

'Yes, she is. She said I might tell you if I liked, though she doesn't want it generally known. But can you help me to meet Mr. Fricker?'

'Are you Trix's ambassador?'

'No, no. She knows nothing about it. She'd be furious.'

Lady Blixworth released her manual hold of her prisoner and sat down, but she kept a detaining eye on her.

'Are you going to throw yourself at Fricker's feet, and ask him to give Trix's money back?'

'Do you know about——?'

'Yes, Lord Barmouth told me; and very much I've enjoyed keeping it to myself. I can feel for Trix; but if you want a lesson, my dear, it's this—the world isn't everybody's football. You won't do any good by clasping Fricker's knees, however pretty you may look.'

'Haven't the least intention of it,' said Peggy coolly. 'I shall go purely on a business footing.' She paused a minute. 'Trix sent you her love, and would like to see you in a little while.'

'I'll write to her from Barslett.' Lady Blixworth smiled reflectively.

'And about Mr. Fricker?'

'It's a business matter—ask him for an appointment.'

'I never thought of that,' said Peggy, ignoring the irony. 'That's the simplest thing, isn't it?'

'Really, I believe, the way you'll do it, it'll be the best. And you might try the knees, perhaps, after all. He's got a heart, I suppose, and an ugly wife I know. So he must be accessible.'

'You're quite wrong in that idea,' persisted Peggy.

'Of course you could get a card for something where he'd be easily enough, but—'

'The appointment for me! Thanks so much, Lady Blixworth. Without your advice I should have been afraid.'

'Give Trix my love, and tell her I think she deserves it all.'

'You don't know what a state she's in,' urged Peggy reproachfully.

'A thoroughly unscrupulous woman—and, bad as times are, I'd have given a hundred pounds to see her shove Lord Barmouth out of the way and skedaddle down that road.'

'You'd be nice to her, but everybody else is horrid.'

'She deserves it all,' was Lady Blixworth's inexorable verdict.

Peggy looked at her with meditative eyes.

'Her obvious duty was to marry him, and please herself afterwards,' Lady Blixworth explained. 'We must have our rules kept, Peggy, else where should we be? And because we were all furious with him for marrying her, we're all the more furious with her now for throwing him over. Nothing is more offensive than to see other people despise what you'd give your eyes to have.'

'She didn't despise it. She's very unhappy at not having it.'

'At not having it for nothing, I suppose? I've no patience with her.'

'Yes, you have—and lots of understanding. And you're rather fond of her too. Well, I shall go and see Mr. Fricker.'

Peggy's doubts as to how far Lady Blixworth revealed her own views about Trix Trevalla may be shared, but it cannot be questioned that she expressed those of the world, which does not like being made a football of unless by the very great or (perhaps) the very rich. The verdict came in the same tones from all quarters. Lord Glentorly gave it to Mrs. Bonfill when he said, 'She was a pirate craft; it's a good thing she's at the bottom of the sea.' Sir Stapleton Stapleton-Staines ventured to suggest it to Lord Barmouth himself by quoting, with delicate reticence, half of that proverb of which he had before approved. Fricker did not put it into words, but he listened smiling while his wife and daughter put it into a great many—which were very forcible and did not lack the directness of popular speech. All the people whom Trix had sought, in one way or another, to use for her own purposes pointed to her fall as a proof, first, of her wickedness,

and, secondly, of their own superiority to any such menial function. In face of such an obvious moral it seems enough to remain approvingly silent; to elaborate it is but to weaken the force of its simple majesty.

And the sinner herself? She sat in Airey Newton's room in Danes Inn, and owned that the world was right. She was no more the draggled hysterical woman who had sought refuge with Peggy Ryle. Her boxes had been called for at Charing Cross; her nerves were better under control. She was chaffing Airey Newton, telling him what a failure her sally into society had proved, declaring that on the strength of his advice at Paris she held him responsible for it all.

'You gave me a most selfish gospel,' she laughed. 'I acted on it, and here I am, back on your hands, Mr. Newton.'

He was puzzled by her, for he could not help guessing that her fall had been severe. Perfect as her self-control now was, the struggle had left its mark on her face; her gay manner did not hide the serious truth that lay behind.

'Oh, it's no use beating about the bush,' she declared, laughing. 'I've played my game, and I've lost it. What are you going to do with me?'

'Well, I suppose life isn't altogether at an end?' he suggested.

'We'll hope not,' smiled Trix; but her voice was not hopeful.

'You were engaged, and you're not. It seems to amount to that.'

'That's putting it very baldly. A little bit more, perhaps.'

How much more she did not tell him. She said nothing of Fricker, nothing of ruin; and no rumours had reached Danes Inn. He saw that her vanity was wounded, he guessed that perhaps her affections might be; but he treated her still as the well-off fashionable woman who for a whim came to visit his poor lodgings, just as she still treated him as the poverty-stricken man who might advise others well or ill, but anyhow made little enough out of the world for himself.

'Well, you seem quite happy without these vanities,' she said. 'Why shouldn't I be?' She leant back and seemed to look at him with a grateful sense of peace and quiet. 'And you don't abuse me! You must know I've been very bad, but you greet me like a friend.'

'Your badness is nothing to me, if you have been bad.'

'Is that indifference—or fidelity?' she asked, lightly still, but with a rather anxious expression in her eyes.

For a moment he was silent, staring out of his big window into the big window opposite. In the end he did not answer her question, but put one in his turn:—

'So you hold me responsible?'

There must have been something more than raillery in her original charge, for when he put his question gravely she answered it in a like way.

'You touched some impulse in me that hadn't been touched before. Of course you didn't mean to do it. You didn't know the sort of person you were talking to. But I thought over what you said, and it chimed in with something in me. So I went and—and had my fling.'

'Ah!' he murmured vaguely, but he turned now and looked at her.

She had meant to give him no confidence, but he drew it from her.

'I've been very unhappy,' she confessed. 'I was very unhappy a good deal of the time, even when I was prosperous. And I've—I've told a lot of lies.'

The blunt statement wrung a passing smile from him.

'And if I'd gone on I must have told many more.'

'My responsibility is evidently heavy.' He paused, and then added, 'There are a good many things that make one lie.'

'Not in Danes Inn?' She laughed a little.

'Yes, even in Danes Inn,' said he, frowning.

'I don't think so, and I'm glad to be here,' she said. 'And some day, when I've more courage, I'll make a full confession and ask you to be friends still. I often thought about you and Peggy and the rest.'

He had begun to smoke, and did not look at her again till the long silence that followed her last words caught his attention. When he turned, she sat looking straight in front of her; he saw that her eyes were full of tears. He put down his pipe and came slowly over to her.

'It's been a bit worse than you've told me, Mrs. Trevalla?' he suggested.

'Yes, a little bit,' she owned. 'And—and I'm not cured yet. I still want to go back. There, I tell you that! I haven't told even Peggy. I've told her all my sins, but I've not told her that

I'm impenitent. I should like to try again. What else is there for me to try for? You have your work; what have I? I can't get my thoughts away from it all.'

She regarded him with a piteous appeal as she confessed that she was not yet chastened.

' You can go back and have another shot,' he said slowly.

Trix would not tell him why that was impossible.

' I'm afraid the door's shut in my face,' was as definite as she could bring herself to be.

' Well, we shall have the benefit, perhaps.'

' If I told you all about it, I don't think you'd want me here.'

' If we all knew all about one another, should we ever pay visits ?'

' Never, I suppose. Or face it out and live together always ! But, seriously, I should be afraid to tell you.'

' Don't idealise me.'

The words were curt, the tone hard ; there was no appearance of joking about him. There was a dreary disheartened sadness on his face, as of a man who struggled always and struggled in vain, who was suffering some defeat that shamed him. He had come near to her ; she reached out her hand and touched his.

' Don't look like that,' she begged. ' I don't know why it is, and you make me more unhappy.'

He turned a sudden glance on her ; their eyes met full for an instant ; then both turned away. But the look that passed between them had held something new ; it made a difference to them ; it seemed in some sort to change the feeling of the dingy room. Their eyes had spoken of a possibility that had suddenly come into the minds of both and had surprised the chance of expression before they could hinder it. Henceforward it must at least be common ground with them that the unhappiness of each was a matter of deep concern to the other. But both crushed down the impulse and the longing to which that knowledge seemed naturally to give birth. Trix was not penitent ; Airey's battle still ended in defeat. Their pretence was against them. She was of the rich. How could he bear to change his life for hers ? She looked round the dingy room. Was this the existence to which she must come, a woman ruined, and content with these four walls ? They were not boy and girl, that the mere thought of love could in a moment sweep all obstacles away. Each felt chains whereof the other knew nothing. It was not hope that

filled them, but rather the forlorn sense of loss—that for them, as they were, such a thing could not be; and they were ashamed to own that the idea of it had been interchanged between them.

Trix ended the constrained silence that had followed on the speech of eyes.

‘Well, we must take the world as we find it,’ she said with a little sigh. ‘At least I’ve tried to make it what I wanted, and, as you see, without success.’ She rose to go, but rose reluctantly.

‘Is it ourselves or the world?’ he asked.

‘We’re the world, I suppose, like other people, aren’t we? I don’t feel too good to belong to it.’

‘If we’re a bit of it, we ought to have more to say to it,’ he suggested, smiling again.

Trix shook her head.

‘It’s too big,’ she objected sorrowfully. ‘Big and hard, and, I believe, most horribly just.’

Airey stroked his beard in meditation over this.

‘I’m inclined to think it is rather just. But I’ll be hanged if there’s an iota of generosity about it!’ said he.

She held out her hand in farewell, and could not help meeting his eyes once again; those deep-set, tired, kindly eyes had a new attraction for her since her wanderings and adventures; they had the strong appeal of offering and asking help all in the same look. She could not prevent herself from saying:—

‘May I come again?’

‘You must come,’ said Airey Newton in a low voice.

He was left resolved that she of all the world should never know his secret. She went back saying that of all the world he at least should never learn how sore a fool she had been. Because of that glance between them these purposes were immutable in both.

(To be continued.)

A NEW DIALOGUE OF THE DEAD.¹

ODYSSEUS. ARISTOTLE.

Aristotle. News from the Earth, Odysseus ! 'Tis of you
 That men are talking ; as the poet says,
 You are become a name : you are the theme
 Of archæologists and of men i' the street !

Odysseus. As how, O Aristotle ?

A. Marry, thus :

Firstly, Professor Ridgeway recently
 Proved—in a manner satisfactory
 Unto himself, but not to several persons—
 That you, Odysseus, were an Irishman,
 And that your father's name was Flaherty—

O. ! ! ! !

A. 'Tis clear as light ; put the digamma first
 (A thing which always is permissible)—
 ΦΑΑΕΡΤΗΣ—see ? You need not be annoyed ;
 They're a good family—the O'Flahertys.
 And, when you come these arguments to tackle,
 You'll see at once Achilles came from Achill ;
 Which being so, 'tis safe to take your oath
 That he and you are Celto-Teutons both.
 But 'tis not of this interesting view
 That I at present would converse with you :
 No ; there's a poem lately writ upon
 You and your exploits.

O. Not by Tennyson ?

A. O no, not Tennyson.

O. Then have they found
 Some more Homeric fragments underground ?

A. No ; it's not Homer.

O. Well, I own I'm glad ;
 Of course he had his merits, Homer had ;
 But as his memory for facts grew dim
 Imagination ran away with him.

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A simple tale he had at second hand
 About my voyagings by sea and land;
 That simple story he embroidered so
 That what I really did I hardly know.

A. Well, here's the book.

O. 'ULYSSES'—why Ulysses ?
 'Twas by that name that Cicero used to call me,
 Until I asked him how he'd like it if
 I were to call him Markos Toullios.
 Well, let that pass. Now, how about the Gods ?
 I used to be considerably vexed
 By Homer's fashion of attributing
 All my achievements, all my glorious deeds
 (Which, though I say it that shouldn't, were fairly decent)
 To heavenly intervention ; so that I
 Felt that I wasn't properly appreciated.
 Does Mr. Phillips so ?

A. I fear you'll see
 He does employ divine machinery,
 Wherein, as stated in my published works,
 The under-mentioned imperfection lurks :
 'Tis used by persons whose constructive wit
 Can tie a knot, but can't unravel it.

O. (reading). I say ! this is much worse than Homer—much.
 Protect me from divinities like these !
 It's like that fellow Lucian—that's the name—
 Who made a sort of *Voces Populi*
 About Olympus ; so, when he came here,
 Pluto imposed a penance, made him turn
 All the Homeric-sacrifice-descriptions
 Into good Attic—which, as well you know,
 Lucian can't write, no more than you or I.
 But this out-Lucians Lucian—Father Zeus
 'Thundering softly ' 'mid the giggling Gods,
 Chaffed for his amours ; truly wonderful !
 Do tell me as an expert, Aristotle,
 Is this buffoonery celestial funny ?
 Ought one to laugh ?

A. See, in my published works,
 My definition of the Laughable
 As Ugly but not Painful ; please yourself ;

But when Gods talk in this peculiar vein
I own I feel considerable pain.

O. Take the next scene. I leave Calypso's isle
('Twas Circe's really) for the other world,
With Phocion and Elpenor; and 'twould seem
Elpenor's grown to be 'an old, old man;'
Homer's Elpenor was that brainless youth,
The youngest of my crew, who, being drunk,
Tumbled off Circe's roof and broke his neck
(A most discreditable incident).

As for the other—Zeus omnipotent!—
Among my comrades never was a man
Called Phocion—for, in fact, he wouldn't scan.
Tell me, O Aristotle, who was Phocion?

A. A person in Greek history, I've a notion.
Methinks Cornelius Nepos writes of him.

O. Well, anyhow, it's more than Homer does.
Then here's Prometheus in the shades below,
Whom University Extensionists
Know as imprisoned on the Caucasus;
What does he here? It seems to me, the Bard
Has mixed Prometheus up with Tityus,
Whom you'll remember; *he*, 'tis true, was here
Once, with a vulture pecking at his liver,
Until the Anti-vivisectionists
Protested, and the thing was put a stop to.
Then, Charon never brought me; I came here
In my own ship; nor did I to the shades
Descend, as Mr. Phillips says I did;
I stayed on top and offered sacrifice.
This chronicler is most unprincipled!
His reading 's wide, his solid facts are scanty;
He knows his Virgil and he knows his Dante—
But not, 'twould seem, his Homer.

A. Don't confuse
The Muse of History with the Tragic Muse.
Full many a bard has won the world's applause
Who mixed the Might Be with the simple Was;
Poetry still its facts may freely twist awry—
'Tis much more philosophical than History.
Is this obscure? then take the meaning hid in't,

One's what you did, the other's what you didn't.
 Poetic Licence, as you'll soon remark,
 Shows how you shot the Suitors—in the dark ;
 Or how, for instance—

O. Does your rule apply
 To the exalted phraseology
 Which Mr. Phillips suffers me to use ?
 As when I talk of perils by the sea
 (An element I never really liked)
 As of 'The white leap and the dance of doom,'
 Or call the beach 'The glorying shingle'—eh ?
 This may be beautiful, I don't deny—

A. But, you would add, 'tis pitched a trifle high.
 As M. Zola isn't here as yet
 I may presume the maxim to recall
 That Truth and Beauty are identical.
 What ! aren't you pleased with this—'Upon this isle
 Set in the glassy ocean's azure swoon' ?

O. Great Aristarchus ! what's an azure swoon ?
 Can swoons be azure ?

A. Ay—as moons are blue.
 Be sure the Beautiful is still the True.
 Take then Penelope's appeal to you :
 'Come, come, Ulysses ! Burn back through the world !
 Come, take the broad seas in one mighty leap !'

O. Moving, no doubt ; but most improbable.
 No ; I can answer, positive and flat,
 Penelope would never have said that ;
 Penelope, whate'er her faults might be,
 Was always eminently sensible.
 This high-toned style, these phrases picturesque,
 They savour something of the writing-desk.
 Now, e'en in Homer (and you've heard me state
 That Homer sometimes was inaccurate),
 When we'd a plain unvarnished thing to say
 We said it in a plain unvarnished way.

A. That was in Epic ; this is in a play.
 I've said, when making in a bygone age
 Critiques (since published) of th' Athenian stage,
 That when a man a tragedy would write
 Pity and Terror he must still excite ;

Some do this by the plot, and some prefer
To do it by the play of character ;
While others entertain the firm conviction
Terror and Pity should be roused by diction.
This latter, I'm informed, is now the fashion—
And, on the whole, it does arouse compassion.

O. It does, indeed. O Aristotle ! quite
It makes me glad I never learnt to write
(As Wolf says, in his *Prolegomena*) !
But this, I know, I should not say to you,
You, who yourself have written.

A. Something, yes ;
More did my pupils, as my critics guess ;
But that's a theme with which I would not bore ye—
'Tis *ἀλλης σκέψεως*, or another story.
Farewell, Odysseus ! Check your captious mood ;
All plays that draw are *ipso facto* good. [Exit.]

O. Endure, my heart ! worse evils now and then
Thou hast endured—but O these literary men !

**THE FRENCH SHARE IN THE MUTINY
AT THE NORE.**

To what extent did Republican France instigate and encourage the naval mutinies at Spithead, Plymouth, and the Nore in 1797?

According to the *Annual Register*, which, no doubt, may be accepted as a fair reflection of the best British public opinion at the time at which the volume for 1797 was compiled, it was strongly suspected in some quarters that among the mutineers at the Nore there were persons 'who acted the part of emissaries from the enemy,' and who endeavoured to push the seamen to extremities. The writer concludes, however, that there was no good ground for the suspicion, and is of opinion that France's only connexion with the mutinies was indirect. The outbreaks, he considers, were merely 'the most emphatic proof that had yet been given to our nation of the influence of French opinion and example and the rapid progress of popular claims and combinations.' Most British historians have taken a similar view. Indeed, there is very little visible evidence to the contrary, beyond a few expressions, scattered through reams of official correspondence, which may be read as indicating that the Admiralty had received information that France intended to send an emissary, or emissaries, to the Nore.

If, nevertheless, we may trust a witness who professes to have been present in the Thames from the beginning of the mutiny there until the execution of Richard Parker, its leader, there ought to be in England despatches or other documents proving not only that the Admiralty was aware that France intended to send a counsellor to the aid of the mutineers, but also that the details of the scheme were known at Whitehall, and that at least one captain received specific directions to intercept the emissary, and actually laid a trap which was almost successful in catching him. Upon the same assumption, there ought to be in France documentary testimony that the emissary sailed, and that he was prevented by death from carrying out his orders; and somewhere in the archives of the Ministry of Marine there ought to be a

report from the man who took the dead emissary's place, and who asserts that he was recognised by Parker as that emissary's representative and successor.

The witness is Alexandre Moreau de Jonnès, who in his hot youth fought by land and sea for the Republic and the Consulate; who subsequently became a statistical and historical writer of some fame; and who, at a great age, died a member of the Institute of France and an Officer of the Legion of Honour. I have made no serious effort to find corroborative testimony in England; for Moreau de Jonnès does not mention—perhaps never knew—what British man-of-war or what captain it was that drew the net in which it was hoped to catch the emissary of the Republic; and, unless one has names to guide one, it is almost hopeless to pursue inquiries of this kind at the Record Office or elsewhere. In France, however, when working some years ago at the Ministry of Marine, I did endeavour to discover the truth. Knowing the name both of the vessel in which the emissary is said to have sailed and of the officer who subsequently made, or declared that he made, a report from the Nore to the Minister in Paris, I had something whereon to base my researches. But I found out nothing. It is true that the Minister who had courteously permitted me to consult certain documents dealing with other subjects had not empowered me to make special investigation into the history of the Mutiny at the Nore, and that therefore I could not appeal to his subordinates to lend me their official assistance in that direction. I was assured, nevertheless, unofficially, by a gentleman who took some little trouble on my behalf, that the report of Moreau de Jonnès, so far as he could ascertain, was not known to exist in the archives, and that no despatch from the commander of the vessel in which the emissary is said to have sailed could be traced.

The story of Moreau de Jonnès, then, stands apparently unsupported, and can be accepted as at best only the word of a man of position and eminence, who went through a great number of very extraordinary adventures in his youth, and who, to the utmost of his ability, truthfully recorded those adventures many years afterwards.

It is practically unknown in England, and I think it is worth making known; for even if, after having percolated through the congested memory of an old man, it be historically of little value, it is in other respects extremely curious and interesting.

The opening of the French Revolution found young Moreau de Jonnès a student at Rennes. In 1791-92 he witnessed some of the most exciting of the scenes in Paris. He then returned to his studies at Rennes, until he was obliged, in September 1792, to respond to the demands of the *levée en masse*. He was at Toulon at the time of its evacuation by the French; he fought in the *Jemmapes*, '74, in the battle which we know as that of 'The Glorious First of June, 1794'; and, after other exciting experiences, chiefly in the West Indies, he was at Brest in the spring of 1797, being then attached to the Artillerie de la Marine.

Moreau de Jonnès, though still a very young man and only a non-commissioned officer, was well educated. One evening he went to the theatre. Next to him sat a gentleman of good appearance; and during the *entr'actes*, which were very long, the two got into conversation. When the time came to separate, the stranger politely asked for the young man's name, and upon hearing it said that he hoped that they should see one another again. Moreau took this as an ordinary expression of civility, and, in consequence, when on the morrow the manning office¹ appointed him to the cutter *Agile*, as gunner, he was much surprised on going on board to discover that his interlocutor of the previous evening was none other than that vessel's commander, who, upon the strength of the conversation at the play, had made inquiries, and then asked for the young man's services.

The *Agile* was a pretty craft and a good sailer; but, according to Moreau, she had been taken and retaken several times during the war, perhaps because, on account of her speed, she had been generally employed in work of a perilous nature. Within twenty-four hours she hauled out to the chain which then closed the mouth of the harbour, and a little later she lay in the roads at anchor opposite La Linon, a collection of ruined houses outside the fortifications. An evil reputation clung to her, owing to the fact that her numerous changes of ownership had landed scores of her men either in the hulks at Portsmouth or in the towers of Brest Castle; and Moreau gives two amusing instances of the manner in which her superstitious crew sought to propitiate fate. A large black cat made a sudden and inexplicable appearance in the forecastle. The captain ordered the animal to be flung overboard if its presence was objected to; but the seamen respectfully

¹ *Bureau des Classes.*

petitioned to be allowed to land it, and finally took it ashore with as much ceremony as if it had been a person of the first importance. Later a screech-owl, probably from the ruins of La Linon, perched in the *Agile's* rigging, and, while it was still there, a boat came off from the shore bringing some official passengers. One of these lost his hat as he was climbing on board—itself a bad omen—and, as there was no time to remove the owl before sailing, the lower deck declared unanimously that the cutter went to sea with the devil to con her. The author mentions incidentally that in another ship he had known the cook to be threatened for having thrown eggshells overboard without having first broken them up, the seamen's belief being that the devil could float on an eggshell, and that if the devil were given facilities for making sea-voyages he would cause trouble.

Running out in the early morning, one day in May, 1797, the *Agile* evaded the British blockading squadron, and hugged the coast until she was far to the north-east. The cutter was then carefully disguised, and made to look as British as possible.

The principal passenger, who became known on board as the Commissioner, seems to have been a typical product of the Revolution, at one time preternaturally reserved, at another vulgarly familiar, with plaited hair upheld by a comb, and with a profusion of tinkling trinkets. Upon learning that Moreau understood English well he grew extremely condescending towards him. It appeared that he had brought on board with him a file of recent London papers, and that, although he could speak English with great facility, he could not read it at all, owing to the fact that he had learnt it conversationally, and had never mastered the serious difficulties which are presented by the anomaly that English pronunciation has little connection with English spelling. He did not admit this; but, alleging that English newspaper type tried his eyes, he asked the captain to allow Moreau to read the journals to him. Moreau was glad enough of the opportunity, and lighted upon plenty of news which interested him as much as it interested the Commissioner. The latter knew already that Lord Bridport's fleet at Spithead had mutinied in April; but his information came from French sources only, and he was obviously very delighted to find it amply confirmed. Indeed, from the nature of his remarks it was clear that he had a mission to open communication with the mutineers, and to make them such offers as might seem advisable. But the latest journals of all put a different complexion

upon the situation. They showed that the British Government had made certain concessions, that the personal influence of the veteran Lord Howe had been exerted with effect, and that the seamen at Spithead had returned to their duty. The Commissioner was in consternation; but he was to some extent consoled by the reading of a paragraph in which it was said that it was feared that another mutiny was about to show itself in the ships lying at the Nore.

Neither the captain nor the Commissioner, however, seemed to show any desire to depart from his original instructions, for upon getting into the latitude of Le Havre the *Agile* struck across the Channel as if to make for Newhaven. She fell in with numerous small cruisers, but none of them attempted to interfere with her, deeming her, perhaps, too insignificant for notice. Matters were so arranged that she made the land at night. The captain then examined the coast with great care, and at last singled out a small vessel which lay in a bay under the shore, and endeavoured to close her, hoisting meanwhile a blue light, and getting what was regarded as a satisfactory answer to his signal. The Commissioner could not conceal either his delight or his impatience. Unfortunately the wind had fallen, and the *Agile* could make no more headway. After a quarter of an hour's vain effort both captain and Commissioner were worked up to a high degree of excitement. The former was in a most risky position, and feared to lose his ship, for the Channel was full of British men-of-war; the latter fancied that when just upon the point of attaining his end he would be driven to sea again. In the result a dingy was hoisted out; the command was entrusted to Moreau; the Commissioner, with his papers and despatches, seated himself in the stern, and, with a couple of seamen at the oars, the little boat pulled away from the cutter. Before she shoved off, however, the captain satisfied himself that the men's arms were in good order, enjoined prudence, and handed down two blunderbusses, each loaded with a dozen or more balls.

Such moonlight as there was enabled Moreau to see that the craft for which he was bound was a serviceable-looking schooner, in which only four men were to be detected on deck. The apparent smallness of her crew gave him confidence, there being four in his boat. Upon hailing the vessel, someone answered in French, '*Messieurs, soyez les bienvenus*'; and as these words were the pre-arranged reply to be made by the people of whom the Commissioner

was in search, the latter did not hesitate to accept an invitation to go on board. Moreau not only kept his two men in the dingy in the face of assurances that grog was to be had on deck, but also made them keep a careful watch on the schooner; and presently he was rewarded. One of his men pointed out that some people were undoubtedly lying concealed under a sail that lay forward. Upon this Moreau seized a blunderbuss, and gave the remaining one to his bow hand. As he did so he heard the Commissioner in angry converse with those in the schooner. Then followed the noise of a scuffle, the report of a weapon, and the dull sound of a body falling on deck. In an instant eight forms appeared at the bulwarks, and a fire from muskets and pistols was opened upon the dingy. Moreau and his men waited only to reply with their blunderbusses, and then boarded, cutlass in hand. When they reached the deck but two persons were still standing there; and those two fled forward at once, dropped into a boat which lay there alongside, and cut themselves loose. The seaman who was then with Moreau ran smartly after them, and discharged his pistols at the fugitives; but a chance shot fired in return struck him in the head and killed him. Moreau, upon looking round, saw that his other follower was missing. Possibly he had been thrown overboard while trying to gain a footing. As for those of the crew who had stuck to their vessel, all were either dead or down; and fearing lest the fugitives would at once return with reinforcements, the solitary Frenchman cut the schooner's cable and hoisted the jib, preparatory to getting the vessel round and heading her to seaward. When about to set and trim the mainsail with the same object, he was fired at and wounded by a man who, himself wounded, lay in the scuppers. As a measure of necessary precaution, therefore, Moreau 'scoured the deck,' as he expresses it, or, in other words, pitched overboard everyone whom he found there, whether dead or living. The Commissioner was among the dead.

What he saw of the affair, and what he experienced afterwards, satisfied him, he says, that the Admiralty, having discovered that some of the mutineers had an understanding with France, had deliberately prepared a trap at the place of rendezvous, and had, moreover, stationed a cruiser close at hand to surprise the *Agile*. The calm prevented the effective carrying out of the latter part of the scheme; but as soon as the wind sprang up again and the cutter attempted to go to the assistance of the prize, the cruiser appeared from under the land, and gave chase to the *Agile*, which

wisely made all possible sail, and went away to seaward, pursued by the British man-of-war.

Moreau also set every sail he could, and stood away in another direction. It rapidly grew as dark as pitch, a succession of squalls came on, and soon it blew a heavy gale. The Frenchman could find no compass, he could see no stars or lights, and soon he had no idea whither he was heading. All that he did find were the Commissioner's papers ; some brandy, with which he washed his wound ; some good shirts, with strips from one of which he bound up his injury, which was painful but not severe ; and a suit of respectable plain clothes, in which, as his own uniform was saturated with blood, he dressed himself, and in which, so he says, he might have been taken for a gentleman yachting for his pleasure. In the meantime the heavy seas swept from the deck all traces of the conflict. Moreau was perfectly powerless, and could only run before the storm. By daylight the wind had moderated, but the weather was thick.

He was about to alter course to starboard, with the object of making the coast of France, which he believed to lie in that direction, when he discovered that he was chased by a man-of-war cutter, and that she was already within gunshot of him. He expected to be fired upon, but the stranger made no hostile demonstration, and, taking advantage of her superiority of speed, presently came up alongside, there continuing within easy hailing distance. Hearing that his neighbours spoke English among themselves, Moreau resigned himself to the prospect of becoming a prisoner of war. After a brief interval a good-looking young officer in the uniform of a midshipman of the Royal Navy presented himself at the cutter's side, and said, with great politeness, 'Monsieur, you are bound for the Nore.' The Frenchman did not know whether to interpret this as an assertion or as an inquiry, and contented himself with making an ambiguous gesture by way of reply, though to himself he muttered, 'You can decide that better than I can.' His situation, indeed, was a most unpleasant one, for he was without colours, ship's papers, or uniform, on board a craft which might well have been stolen. Appearances were all against him, and, even if he told the truth, he could produce no witnesses to support him. He therefore, in the conversation which followed, temporised, and committed himself as little as possible. The midshipman, who had come out of the Thames, gave Moreau to understand that his sympathies were with the

turbulent seamen in the fleet there, and that delegates from France were expected to join and direct the disaffected people; and this seems to have tempted the Frenchman to try the effect of some password which he had discovered in the papers of the dead Commissioner. The result was magical. He was invited on board the cutter, from which, apparently, a crew was sent to take charge of his schooner; and after he had been given a substantial breakfast, during which the midshipman behaved to him as to a man of considerable importance, he was pressed to lie down and sleep in his host's cabin.

When he awoke the cutter was entering the mouth of the Thames; and ahead of her, at the Nore, lay a large fleet, which had that morning hoisted the red flag of mutiny. It was the 1st of Prairial—the 20th of May, 1797. From that time forward—or, according to another passage in the account, from May 22—Moreau was treated as the delegate of the French Republic. Upon the arrival of the cutter off Sheerness the Frenchman was rowed to the *Sandwich*, the headquarters of the mutineers, and the flagship of their 'President,' Richard Parker, a young man who, it may be explained, had been a midshipman in the Navy, had been reduced in December, 1793, by court-martial for misbehaviour, had been discharged from the service as insane in 1794, and had subsequently again joined it as a seaman. While waiting amid a crowd of boats for an opportunity to get on board, Moreau, so he declares, saw a ship's surgeon,¹ who had been tarred and feathered as a spy, being set ashore at Sheerness. He adds, incidentally, that the commander of a sloop who had cruelly flogged a number of his people, and so rendered himself bitterly hated, was a little later tried and actually condemned to death by the mutineers, and that the sentence would have been carried out had not Moreau himself assisted the prisoner to escape.

On the deck of the *Sandwich* the Frenchman found the twelve delegates of the mutineers, who, standing under the break of the poop amid a crowd of lookers-on, were receiving deputations from the various disaffected ships. Among the delegates was their leader, Parker, 'a tall young man with a mild and melancholy face, aged about thirty, who, though a Scot, had a dark complexion and black hair.' He was of simple manners, and dressed like an ordinary seaman. At a convenient opportunity Moreau was introduced to him, and by him introduced to the

¹ Of H.M.S. *Montagu*.

delegates. Parker, in good French, welcomed the stranger, and bid him consider himself the guest of the ship. The midshipman of the cutter then departed, and some hours later sent on board a chest full of clothes which had been found in the schooner, and which were supposed to belong to the Frenchman, together with a large quantity of brandy from the same source. That day Moreau dined with the leaders; but subsequently he took his meals in his cabin.

At night he had a long conference with Parker, to whom he explained that the real delegate had been killed, but that he, as the unfortunate official's heir, had with him the dead man's instructions from the government of the Republic, and was prepared to carry them out in the most punctual manner. They were, he said, all that the mutineers could desire, seeing that France was watching the movement with the liveliest interest, and was sincerely anxious to second it so far as might be necessary or possible.

The arch-mutineer is described as being both intelligent and personally disinterested, but perhaps less confident of the issue of his cause than such a leader ought to have been if he hoped to inspire others. He was under no illusions as to the strength of the forces against which he and his friends had arrayed themselves, or as to the means at the disposal of the authorities. He seemed to be convinced that, even if his projects should succeed, he would not live to witness their success, seeing that many dangerous enemies were plotting to ruin him.

Moreau notes that, in spite of what was going on, the general discipline of the fleet was maintained with the utmost scruple, lights being extinguished at the prescribed hour, the rounds made, and guard rowed as usual.

One day a long string of boats came off from the shore, flying the Admiralty flag, and conveying to the *Sandwich* three members of the Board of Admiralty who had come down to have an interview with Parker. These, we know, were the Earl of Spencer, Lord Arden, and Rear-Admiral William Young. Moreau thinks that the negotiations might have led to a settlement but for the pride and haughtiness of Arden, who saw fit to exasperate the mutineers by making use of threats. Parker, who up to that point had been deferential and cool, is represented as having interrupted with the following somewhat high-flown speech:—

What, my Lord! When we receive you as the dove bringing to the ark the olive-branch of peace and friendship, do you come with menace in your mouth and a feeling of hateful revenge in your heart? You ought to be a father to the seamen. Instead, you invoke punishments upon them; you want to send them to execution; you seek for blood wherewith to wash out your own crimes. Well, you shall have blood. But I pray that the innocent blood which you will have shed may fall upon your own head, that it may become an ineffaceable stigma on the most distant of your descendants, and that all who see you may cry, 'That is the hangman of the fleet at the Nore; curse him!' Farewell, my Lords! You stand out for injustice and oppression; we stand out for making every effort to free ourselves. May God judge between us!

Just as their Lordships were departing for the shore a dramatic event happened. A brig-of-war which lay to seaward suddenly covered herself with signals, while her crew manned the yards and cheered wildly. Presently it was seen that four large ships, all flying the red flag, were coming in from the eastward to join the mutineers. These proved to be four vessels belonging to the fleet of Admiral Duncan, who was then watching the ports of Holland, and who a few months later, in spite of the disaffection in his command, was to fight and win the battle of Camperdown. Moreau asserts that the sight had a powerful effect upon their Lordships, who hurried away as quickly as possible. The Frenchman had advised that they should be detained as hostages. 'It would serve them right,' Parker had replied, 'but I do not wish to set an example of violence.' Scarcely had the Commissioners landed at Sheerness ere they declared the leaders of the mutiny to be outlaws, and promised rewards to those who should betray them. In the meantime, General Sir Charles Grey had been placed in command of a considerable force of troops in the neighbourhood of Sheerness; and the Government had caused the buoys in the river to be removed, chains to be stretched across the stream, batteries to be erected, and furnaces for the heating of shot to be prepared, so as to confine the mutineers to the water, and prevent them from making any attempt upon the Metropolis. On their side the mutineers declared a blockade of London, and moored vessels in such a manner as to prevent supplies from reaching it by water.

It must have been before the arrival of Sir Charles Grey that the mutineers one morning landed about 10,000 men, who made a demonstration by marching in procession through the streets of Sheerness. The inhabitants, according to Moreau, fled to Chatham; but no disorders occurred in the town. The Frenchman, in one of his nocturnal confabulations with Parker,

criticised the demonstration as an empty piece of theatricalism; and the leader of the mutineers agreed with him. Parker averred, however, that he was obliged to 'play to the gallery,' for that otherwise he could not manage the more turbulent of the delegates. It was these very turbulent spirits who ultimately betrayed him. Half the delegates, says Moreau, were hard, stern, determined fellows of a Puritanical type. Their narrow-mindedness was a burden upon the undertaking to which they had committed themselves; but there was no dishonesty about them. The younger and more energetic spirits, on the other hand, were ready for anything that seemed to promise them excitement, and were a real danger to the cause. The seamen suspected them, and frequently changed their representatives; but they did not succeed in purging the body of delegates from those selfish and venal elements which trafficked with treachery and kept open hands ready to receive a bribe.

Moreau asserts that he always counselled that the mutineers must make some new and distinct forward movement each day—unless, indeed, they were prepared to see their cause languish and die out—and that Parker shared his views, but was too weak to enforce them. One of Moreau's projects was that the fleet at the Nore should sail round to Spithead, and there induce Lord Bridport's command to rehoist the red flag and join it. Instead of following this advice, Parker allowed himself to be persuaded into sending delegates to Portsmouth, and awaiting their report concerning the disposition of the squadron there. The men departed, but they were never subsequently heard from. Another of Moreau's projects was an attack upon London. This resolved itself into an expedition of armed boats up the river—possibly the expedition of May 27th to Long Reach—to induce fresh seamen to join the insurrection. The people in the merchant vessels and other craft which were boarded made liberal promises, but never kept them; and the only result of the foray westward was that the authorities adopted precautions which rendered any repetition of it impossible.

These fiascos, and the obvious lack of initiative and union among the delegates, led Moreau one day to ask Parker whether, upon seeing that the cause was hopeless, he would accept the shelter of a French port, or would even carry the fleet over to Brest upon receiving from the Republic such guarantees as he might deem necessary. The Frenchman declared that

he had already written on the subject to the Minister of Marine in a despatch which Parker had forwarded for him to Dunkerque by the hands of a fisherman; and that he felt confident that orders had been sent from Paris to Brest with a view to securing for the fleet a proper reception there. Parker replied that when he had raised the flag of mutiny against the oppressors of the seamen he had deliberately staked his life, seeing that he knew that his conduct would never be pardoned. He disliked the idea of fleeing from a danger which he had intentionally provoked; nor could he bring himself to take a step which would deprive his country of its chief weapon of defence, and which would have both the appearance and the effects of an act of treason. In short, he had made up his mind to remain where he was until the last.

Having failed with Parker, Moreau appealed to Davis,¹ another of the leaders. By Davis's influence the proposal to carry the fleet to Brest was, says Moreau, laid before the delegates, the majority of whom voted for it; and it was arranged that the ships should sail on the evening of the following day. When, however, the morning dawned, it was seen that four vessels had cut their cables and had gone up the river, deserting the mutineers; and after this evidence of half-heartedness the scheme was dropped. The Frenchman declares that the leaders in the fugitive ships had been bought over by the Admiralty.

From that moment treason showed itself in every direction. Parker narrowly escaped being poisoned, and was so magnanimous as to spare the would-be poisoner, whom he caused to be put ashore at Sheerness. Fighting broke out in various vessels between the parties into which their crews were divided, and, although the mutineers maintained the command, it was clear that the collapse was approaching. Parker fully understood the situation, and, sending one night for Moreau de Jonnès, told him that he did not wish to drag the Frenchman down with him, and had made provision for his guest's safety. Moreau protested, but eventually was led to the stern gallery of the *Sandwich*, and made to descend by means of a Jacob's ladder into a boat that lay below, and that put him ashore on the other side of Sheerness. There, sheltered by the darkness from a look-out post of Militia, Moreau was taken charge of by a girl in the service of Parker's

¹ Or Davies. This man acted as Parker's flag-captain.

wife, who conducted him across a network of lanes, courts and gardens to Mrs. Parker's house. Mrs. Parker could not offer to keep him, but presently she caused him to be taken by the girl to an upper room in an isolated and deserted building, whence he could see the ships lying at the Nore. By that time five only of them still flew the red flag. Even the *Sandwich* had hauled it down. Moreau states that part of the crew had approached Sir Charles Grey on the previous day, and, after coming to an arrangement with him, had arrested Parker and Davis and handed them over upon payment of 12,000 francs (480*l.*).

Parker, we know, was taken on June 14, and was brought to court-martial on June 22. Moreau avers that the trial took place in the *Neptune*, off Greenwich,¹ because the Admiralty was afraid to hold it at the Nore, where Parker was very popular. Three days later sentence was pronounced. In the meantime the Frenchman spent a most anxious time in his retreat, fearful of so much as looking out of his window, lest he should be recognised by some curious person with a good telescope in the roadstead. In order to see what was going on he arranged a mirror in such a manner as to reflect the whole anchorage to him without obliging him to expose himself. The girl seized favourable opportunities and brought him supplies, assuring him daily that Parker would never be executed, seeing that he had behaved throughout with extraordinary moderation. Mrs. Parker, however, was not of that opinion if, as Moreau assures us, she made a fruitless journey to Windsor in order to appeal to the King on her husband's behalf. Moreau, too, feared the worst; and his excitement on his friend's behalf and for his own safety at length brought on an attack of fever, from which he was only beginning to recover when he was informed by the girl that arrangements had been made for his escape, and that he must hold himself ready to leave for France on the following night—the night of June 28.

Supplied with arms, which he concealed, and disguised as a fisherman, the fugitive was taken at the appointed time to a secluded inlet, where he found a small craft manned by four stalwart seamen, who, having been implicated in the mutiny, were, like himself, anxious to leave the country, and who were disguised much as he was. Delayed by wind and tide, the boat was still in the mouth of the Thames when her people discovered that she

¹ It should be Greenhithe.

had excited the evident suspicions of a brig-of-war, which was bearing down on her. This obliged her to alter course and to head again for the Nore; and soon she fell in with an ever-increasing number of little vessels of all kinds, which seemed to be making for Blackstakes. The mutineers were glad enough to lose themselves in the crowd, though they did not relish the idea of once more approaching the fleet of men-of-war. They could not, however, quit their motley consorts without exciting suspicion, and they had to sustain conversation as best they might with their neighbours. The tension of the situation, combined with the fever, made poor Moreau so weak that he collapsed in the bottom of the boat.

When he came to himself again he found that his boat was wedged in among an enormous number of small craft, some of which were full of sightseers, while others belonged to the fleet at the Nore. All were assembled round the *Sandwich*, from the lofty side of which, at the level of the upper deck, protruded a platform which was held in position by falls from the rigging above. Over it a long cord depended from a yardarm. A man was conducted to the platform. He spoke to a clergyman who accompanied him. Then he addressed the crowd of men in the boats below him, these listening bareheaded and in absolute silence. A gun was fired, the platform fell, and Parker's body swung alone in the air. The fatal signal had almost cut short the culprit's prayers for 'his ungrateful country,' and his more reasonable expression of a hope that after his death there might be no more executions in respect of what had passed; and when the gun boomed the people, as with one voice, cried 'Amen!'

After the 'barbarous execution' of his late host, Moreau, with his companions, moving off with the scattering crowd of boats, joined a little flotilla which was making for Margate, and so eluded the gun-brig without again attracting her attention. When night came on the fugitives experienced no difficulty in getting across the Channel, and though at one time chased by a British cutter, reached Calais in the early morning without further adventure. The Frenchman was very ill with fever during the crossing, and did not fully regain consciousness until he found himself in a tavern to which he had been carried. The escaped mutineers ultimately joined an American ship. 'I have often thought,' says the narrator, 'that one of them may have lived to become one of those intrepid commodores whose names we love to meet with

52 FRENCH SHARE IN THE MUTINY AT THE NORE.

among those of the hardy seamen of North America.' Poor Perry! Poor Decatur! Moreau himself obtained passage in a coaster to Morlaix, whence he rejoined his demi-brigade at Brest.

I tell the extraordinary story as Moreau de Jonnès tells it. Even if, as I have said, there be not a word of truth in it, it is certainly interesting. I think, however, that there is some foundation of fact at the bottom of the narrative.

W. LAIRD CLOWES.

A FEUD IN THE FIVE TOWNS.

WHEN Clive Timmis paused at the side-door of Ezra Brunt's great shop in Machin Street, and the door was opened to him by Ezra Brunt's daughter before he had had time to pull the bell, not only all Machin Street knew it within the hour, but also most persons of consequence left in Hanbridge on a Thursday afternoon—Thursday being early-closing day. For Hanbridge, though it counts sixty thousand inhabitants and is the chief of the Five Towns—that vast, huddled congeries of boroughs devoted to the manufacture of earthenware—is a place where the art of attending to other people's business still flourishes in rustic perfection.

Ezra Brunt's drapery establishment was the foremost retail house, in any branch of trade, of the Five Towns. It had no rival nearer than Manchester, thirty-six miles off; and even Manchester could exhibit nothing conspicuously superior to it. The most acutely critical shoppers of the Five Towns, women who were in the habit of coming to London every year for the January sales, spoke of Brunt's as a 'right-down good shop.' And the husbands of these ladies, manufacturers who employed from two hundred to a thousand men, regarded Ezra Brunt as a commercial magnate of equal importance with themselves. Brunt, who had served his apprenticeship at Birmingham, started business in Machin Street in 1862, when Hanbridge was half its present size and all the best shops of the district were in Oldeastle, an ancient burg contiguous with, but holding itself proudly aloof from, the industrial Five Towns. He paid eighty pounds a year rent, and lived over the shop, and in the summer quarter his gas bill was always under a sovereign. For ten years success tarried, but in 1872 his daughter Eva was born and his wife died, and from that moment the sun of his prosperity climbed higher and higher into heaven. He had been profoundly attached to his wife, and, having lost her, he abandoned himself to the mercantile struggle with that morose and terrible ferocity which was the root of his character. Of rude, gaunt aspect, gruffly taciturn by nature, and variable in temper, he yet had the precious instinct for soothing

customers. To this day he can surpass his own shopwalkers in the admirable and tender solicitude with which, forsaking dialect, he drops into a lady's ear his famous stereotyped phrase: 'Are you receiving proper attention, Madam?' From the first he eschewed the facile trickeries and ostentations which allure the populace. He sought a high-class trade, and by waiting he found it. He would never advertise on hoardings; for many years he had no signboard over his shop front; and whereas the name of 'Bostocks,' the huge cheap drapers lower down Machin Street on the opposite side, attacks you at every railway station and in every tramcar, the name of 'E. Brunt' is to be seen only in a modest regular advertisement on the front page of 'The Staffordshire Signal.' Repose, reticence, respectability: it was these attributes which he decided his shop should possess, and by means of which he succeeded. To enter Brunt's, with its silently swinging doors, its broad, easy staircases, its long floors covered with warm, red linoleum, its partitioned walls, its smooth mahogany counters, its unobtrusive mirrors, its rows of youths and virgins in black, and its pervading atmosphere of quietude and discretion, was like entering a temple before the act of oblation has commenced. You were conscious of some supreme administrative influence everywhere imposing itself. That influence was Ezra Brunt. And yet the man differed utterly from the thing he had created. His was one of those dark and passionate souls which smoulder in this harsh midland district as slag-heaps smoulder on the pit-banks, revealing their strange fires only in the darkness.

In 1899 Brunt's establishment occupied four shops, Nos. 52, 56, 58 and 60, in Machin Street. He had bought the freeholds at a price which timid people regarded as exorbitant, but the solicitors of Hanbridge secretly applauded his enterprise and shrewdness in anticipating the enormous rise in ground-values which has now been in rapid, steady progress there for more than a decade. He had thrown the interiors together and rebuilt the frontages in handsome freestone. He had also purchased several shops opposite, and rumour said that it was his intention to offer these latter to the Town Council at a low figure if the Council would cut a new street leading from his premises to the Market Square. Such a scheme would have met with general approval. But there was one serious hiatus in the plans of Ezra Brunt—to wit, No. 54 Machin Street. No. 54, separating 52 and 56, was a

chemist's shop, shabby but sedate as to appearance, owned and occupied by George Christopher Timmis, a mild and venerable citizen, and a local preacher in the Wesleyan Methodist Connexion. For nearly thirty years Brunt had coveted Mr. Timmis's shop ; more than twenty years have elapsed since he first opened negotiations for it. Mr. Timmis was by no means eager to sell—indeed his attitude was distinctly a repellent one—but a bargain would undoubtedly have been concluded, had not a report reached the ears of Mr. Timmis to the effect that Ezra Brunt had remarked at the 'Turk's Head' that 'th' old leech was only sticking out for every brass farthing he could get.' The report was untrue, but Mr. Timmis believed it, and from that moment Ezra Brunt's chances of obtaining the chemist's shop vanished completely. His lawyer expended diplomacy in vain, raising the offer week by week till the incredible sum of three thousand pounds was reached. Then Ezra Brunt himself saw Mr. Timmis, and without a word of prelude said: 'Will ye take three thousand guineas for this bit o' property ?' 'Not thirty thousand guineas,' said Mr. Timmis quietly ; the stern pride of the benevolent old local preacher had been aroused. 'Then be damned to you !' said Ezra Brunt, who had never been known to swear before. Thenceforth a feud existed, not less bitter because it was a feud in which nothing was said and nothing done—a silent and implacable mutual resistance. The sole outward sign of it was the dirty and stumpy brown-brick shop-front of Mr. Timmis, squeezed in between those massive luxurious façades of stone which Ezra Brunt soon afterwards erected. The pharmaceutical business of Mr. Timmis was not a very large one, and, fiscally, Ezra Brunt could have swallowed him at a meal and suffered no inconvenience ; but in that the aged chemist had lived on just half his small income for some fifty years past, his position was impregnable. Hanbridge smiled cynically at this *impasse* produced by an idle word, and recognising the equality of the antagonists, leaned neither to one side nor to the other. At intervals, however, the legend of the feud was embroidered with new and effective detail in the mouth of some inventive gossip, and by degrees it took high place among those piquant social histories which illustrate the real life of a town, and which parents recount to their children with such zest in moods of reminiscence.

When George Christopher Timmis buried his wife, Ezra Brunt, as a near neighbour, was asked to the funeral. 'The *cortège* will

move at half-past 1,' ran the printed invitation, and at 1.15 Brunt's carriage was decorously in place behind the hearse and the two mourning coaches. The demeanour of the chemist and the draper towards each other was a sublime answer to the demands of the occasion : some people even said that the breach had been healed ; but these were not of the discerning.

The most active person at the funeral was the chemist's only nephew, Clive Timmis, partner in a small but prosperous firm of majolica manufacturers at Bursley. Clive, who was seldom seen in Hanbridge, made a favourable impression on everyone by his pleasing, unaffected manner, and his air of discretion and success. He was a bachelor of thirty-two, and lived in lodgings at Bursley. On the return of the funeral party from the cemetery, Clive Timmis found Brunt's daughter Eva in his uncle's house. Uninvited, she had left her place in the private room at her father's shop in order to assist Timmis's servant Sarah in the preparation of that solid and solemn repast which must inevitably follow every proper interment in the Five Towns. Without false modesty she introduced herself to one or two of the men who had surprised her at her work, and then quietly departed just as they were sitting down to table and Sarah had brought in the hot tea-cakes. Clive Timmis saw her only for a moment, but from that moment she was his one thought. During the evening, which he spent alone with his uncle, he behaved in every particular as a nephew should, yet he was acting a part ; his real self roved after Ezra Brunt's daughter, wherever she might be. Clive had never fallen in love, though several times in his life he had tried hard to do so. He had long wished to marry—wished ardently ; he had even got into the way of regarding every woman he met, and he met many, in the light of a possible partner. 'Can it be *she*?' he had asked himself a thousand times, and then answered half sadly, 'No.' Not one woman had touched his imagination, coincided with his dream. It is strange that after seeing Eva Brunt he forgot thus to interrogate himself. For a fortnight, while he went his ways as usual, her image occupied his heart, throwing that once orderly chamber into the wildest confusion ; and he let it remain, dimly aware of some delicious danger. He inspected the image every night before he slept, and every morning when he awoke, and made no effort to define its distracting charm ; he knew only that Eva Brunt was absolutely and in every detail unlike all other women. On the second

Sunday he murmured during the sermon: 'But I only saw her for a minute.' A few days afterwards, he took the tram to Hanbridge.

'Uncle,' he said, 'how should you like me to come and live here with you? I've been thinking things out a bit, and I thought perhaps you'd like it. I expect you must feel rather lonely now.'

The neat, fragrant shop was empty, and the two men stood behind the big glass-fronted case of Burroughs and Wellcome's preparations. Clive's venerable uncle happened to be looking into a drawer marked 'Gentianæ Rad. Pulv.' He closed the drawer with slow hesitation, and then, stroking his long white beard, replied in that deliberate voice which seemed always to tremble with religious fervour, 'The hand of the Lord is in this thing, Clive. I have wished that you might come to live here with me. But I was afraid it would be too far from the works.'

'Pooh! That's nothing,' said Clive.

As he lingered at the shop door for the Bursley car to pass the end of Machin Street, Eva Brunt went by. He raised his hat with diffidence, and she smiled. It was a marvellous chance. His heart leapt into a throb which was half agony and half delight. 'I am in love,' he said gravely. He had just discovered the fact, and the discovery filled him with exquisite apprehension.

If he had waited till the age of thirty-two for that springtime of the soul which we call love, Clive had not waited for nothing. Eva was a woman to enrage the heart of the man whose imagination could pierce the agitating secrets immured in that calm and silent bosom. Siender and scarcely tall, she belonged to the order of spare, slight-made women, who hide within their slim frames an endowment of profound passion far exceeding that of their more voluptuously formed sisters; who never coarsen into stoutness; and who at forty are as disturbing as at twenty. At this date Eva was twenty-six. She had a rather small, white face, which was a mask to the casual observer, and the very mirror of her feelings to anyone with eyes to read its signs. 'I tell you what you are like,' said Clive to her once; 'you are like a fine racehorse, always on the quiver.' Yet many people considered her cold and impassive. Her walk and bearing showed a sensitive independence, and when she spoke it was usually in tones of command. The girls in the shop, where she was a

power second only to Ezra Brunt, were a little afraid of her, chiefly because she poured terrible scorn on their small affectations, jealousies, and vendettas. But they liked her because, in their own phrase, 'there was no nonsense about' this redoubtable woman. She hated shams and make-believes with a bitter and ruthless hatred. She was the heiress to at least five thousand a year, and knew it well, but she never encouraged her father to complicate their simple mode of life with the pomps of wealth. They lived in a house with a large garden at Pireford, which is on the summit of the steep ridge between the Five Towns and Oldcastle, and they kept two servants, and a coachman who was also gardener. Eva paid the servants good wages and took care to get good value therefor. 'It's not often I have any bother with my servants,' she would say, 'for they know that if there is any trouble I would just as soon clear them out and put on an apron and do the work myself.' She was an accomplished house-mistress, and could bake her own bread ; in towns not one woman in a thousand can bake. With the coachman she had little to do, for she could not rid herself of a sentimental objection to the carriage ; it savoured of 'airs' ; when she used it she used it as she might use a tramcar. It was her custom, every day except Saturday, to walk to the shop about eleven o'clock, after her house had been set in order. She had been thoroughly trained in the business, and had spent a year at a first-rate shop in High Street, Kensington. Millinery was her speciality, and she still watched over that department with a particular attention, but for some time past she had risen beyond the limitations of departments, and assisted her father in the general management of the vast concern. In commercial aptitude she resembled the typical Frenchwoman. Although he was her father, Ezra Brunt had the wit to recognise her talents, and he always listened to her suggestions, which, however, sometimes startled him. One of them was that he should import into the Five Towns a *modiste* from Paris, offering a salary of two hundred a year. The old provincial stood aghast ! He had the idea that all Parisian women were stage-dancers. And to pay four pounds a week to a female ! Nevertheless Mademoiselle Bertot, styled in the shop 'Madame,' now presides over Ezra Brunt's dressmakers, draws her four pounds a week (of which she saves two), and by mere nationality has given a unique distinction and success to her branch of the business. Eva occupied a small room opening off the principal

showroom, and during hours of work she issued thence but seldom. Only customers of the highest importance might speak with her. She was a power felt rather than seen. Employés who knocked at her door always did so with a certain awe of what awaited them on the other side, and a consciousness that the moment was unsuitable for levity. 'If you please, Miss Eva—.' Here she gave audience to the 'buyers' and window-dressers, listened to complaints and excuses, and occasionally had a secret orgy of afternoon tea with one or two of her friends. None but these few girls, mostly younger than herself and remarkable only in that their dislike of the snobbery of the Five Towns, though less fiercely displayed, agreed with her own, really knew Eva. To them alone did she unveil herself, and by them she was idolised. 'She is simply splendid when you know her—such a jolly girl!' they would say to other people, but other people, especially other women, could not believe it. They fearfully respected her because she was very well dressed, and had quantities of money. But they called her 'a curious creature'; it was inconceivable to them that she should choose to work in a shop; and her tongue had a causticity which was sometimes exceedingly disconcerting and mortifying. As for men, she was shy of them, and moreover she loathed the elaborate and insincere ritual of deference which the average man practises towards women unrelated to him, particularly when they are young and rich. Her father she adored, without knowing it; for he often angered her, and humiliated her in private. As for the rest, she was after all only six-and-twenty.

'If you don't mind, I should like to walk along with you,' Clive Timmis said to her one Sunday evening in the porch of the Bethesda Chapel.

'I shall be glad,' she answered at once, 'Father isn't here and I'm all alone.' Ezra Brunt was indeed seldom there, counting, in the matter of attendance at chapel, among what were called 'the weaker brethren.'

'I am going over to Oldeastle,' Clive explained calmly.

So began the formal courtship—more than a month after Clive had settled in Machin Street, for he was far too discreet to engender, by precipitancy, any suspicion in the haunts of scandal that his true reason for establishing himself in his uncle's household was a certain rich young woman who was to be found every day next door. Guided as much by instinct as by tact, Clive

approached Eva with an almost savage simplicity and naturalness of manner, ignoring not only her father's wealth, but all the feigned punetilio of a wooer. His face said : 'Let there be no beating about the bush ; I like you.' Hers answered, 'Good ! We will see.' From the first he pleased her, and not least in treating her exactly as she would have wished to be treated, namely as a quite plain person of that part of the middle class which is neither upper nor lower. Few men in the Five Towns would have been capable of forgetting Ezra Brunt's income in talking to Ezra Brunt's daughter. Fortunately Timmis had a proud, confident spirit, the spirit of one who unaided has wrested success from the world's death-like clutch. Had Eva the reversion of fifty thousand a year instead of five, he, Clive, was still a prosperous plain man, well able to support a wife in the position to which God had called him. Their walks together grew more and more frequent, and they became intimate, exchanging ideas and rejoicing openly at the similarity of those ideas. Although there was no concealment in these encounters, still there was a circumspection which resembled the clandestine. By a silent understanding Clive did not enter the house at Pireford ; to have done so would have excited remark, for this house, unlike some, had never been the *rendezvous* of young men ; much less, therefore, did he invade the shop. No ! The chief part of their lovemaking (for such it was, though the term would have roused Eva's contemptuous anger) occurred in the streets ; in this they did but follow the traditions of their class. Thus the idyll, so matter-of-fact upon the surface, but within which glowed secret and adorable fires, progressed towards its culmination. Eva, the artless fool—oh, how simple are the wisest at times!—thought that the affair was hid from the shop. But was it possible ? Was it possible that in those tiny bedrooms on the third floor, where the evening heavy hours were ever lightened with breathless interminable recitals of what some 'he' had said and some 'she' had replied, such an enthralling episode should escape discovery ? The dormitories knew of Eva's 'attachment' before Eva herself. Yet none knew how it was known. The whisper arose like Venus from a sea of trivial gossip, miraculously, exquisitely. On the night when the first rumour of it traversed the passages there was scarcely any sleep at Brunt's, while Eva up at Pireford slumbered as a young girl.

On the Thursday afternoon with which we began, Brunt's was

deserted save for the housekeeper, and Eva, who was writing letters in her room.

'I saw you from my window, coming up the street,' she said to Clive, 'and so I ran down to open the door. Will you come into father's room? He is in Manchester for the day, buying.'

'I knew that,' said Timmis.

'How did you know?' She observed that his manner was somewhat nervous and constrained.

'You yourself told me last night—don't you remember?'

'So I did.'

'That's why I sent the note round this morning to say I'd call this afternoon. You got it, I suppose?'

She nodded thoughtfully. 'Well, what is this business you want to talk about?'

It was spoken with a brave carelessness, but he caught the tremor in her voice, and saw her little hand shake as it lay on the table amid her father's papers. Without knowing why he should do so, he stepped hastily forward and seized that hand. Her emotion unmanned him. He thought he was going to cry; he could not account for himself.

'Eva,' he said thickly, 'you know what the business is; you know, don't you?'

She smiled. That smile, the softness of her hand, the sparkle in her eye, the heave of her small bosom . . . it was the divinest miracle! Clive, manufacturer of majolica, went hot and then cold, and then his wits were suddenly his own again.

'That's all right,' he murmured, and sighed, and placed on Eva's lips the first kiss that had ever lain there.

'Dear boy,' she said later, 'you should have come up to Pireford, not here, and when father was there.'

'Should I?' he answered happily. 'It just occurred to me all of a sudden this morning that you would be here, and that I couldn't wait.'

'You will come up to-night and see father?'

'I had meant to.'

'You had better go home now.'

'Had I?'

She nodded, putting her lips tightly together—a trick of hers.

'Come up about half-past eight.'

'Good! I will let myself out.'

He left her, and she gazed dreamily at the window, which

looked on to a whitewashed yard. The next moment someone else entered the room with heavy footsteps. She turned round a little startled.

It was her father.

‘Why! You *are* back early, father! How——’ She stopped. Something in the old man’s glance gave her a premonition of disaster. To this day she does not know what accident brought him from Manchester two hours sooner than usual, and to Machin Street instead of Pireford.

‘Has young Timmis been here?’ he inquired curtly.

‘Yes.’

‘Ha!’ with subdued, sinister satisfaction, ‘I saw him going out. He didn’t see me.’ Ezra Brunt deposited his hat and sat down.

Intimate with all her father’s various moods, she saw instantly and with terrible certainty that a series of chances had fatally combined themselves against her. If only she had not happened to tell Clive that her father would be at Manchester this day! If only her father had adhered to his customary hour of return! If only Clive had had the sense to make his proposal openly at Pireford some evening! If only he had left a little earlier! If only her father had not caught him going out by the side door on a Thursday afternoon when the place was empty! Here, she guessed, was the suggestion of furtiveness which had raised her father’s unreasoning anger, often fierce, and always incalculable.

‘Clive Timmis has asked me to marry him, father.’

‘Has he?’

‘Surely you must have known, father, that he and I were seeing each other a great deal.’

‘Not from your lips, my girl.’

‘Well, father——’ Again she stopped, this strong and capable woman, gifted with a fine brain to organise, and a powerful will to command. She quailed, robbed of speech, before the causeless, vindictive, and infantile wrath of an old man who happened to be in a bad temper. She actually felt like a naughty schoolgirl before him. Such is the tremendous influence of life-long habit, the irresistible power of the *patria potestas* when it has never been relaxed. Ezra Brunt saw in front of him only a cowering child.

‘Clive is coming up to see you to-night,’ she went on timidly, clearing her throat.

‘Humph! Is he?’

The rosy and tender dream of five minutes ago lay in fragments at Eva's feet. She brooded with stricken apprehension upon the forms of obstruction which his despotism might choose.

The next morning Clive and his uncle breakfasted together as usual in the parlour behind the chemist's shop.

'Uncle,' said Clive brusquely, when the meal was nearly finished, 'I'd better tell you that I've proposed to Eva Brunt.'

Old George Timmis lowered the 'Manchester Guardian' and gazed at Clive over his steel-rimmed spectacles.

'She is a good girl,' he remarked, 'she will make you a good wife. Have you spoken to her father?'

'That's the point. I saw him last night, and I'll tell you what he said. These were his words: "You can marry my daughter, Mr. Timmis, when your uncle agrees to part with his shop!"'

'That I shall never do, nephew,' said the aged patriarch quietly and deliberately.

'Of course you won't, uncle. I shouldn't think of suggesting it. I'm merely telling you what he said.' Clive laughed harshly.

'Why,' he added, 'the man must be mad!'

'What did the young woman say to that?' his uncle inquired.

Clive frowned. 'I didn't see her last night,' he said. 'I didn't ask to see her. I was too angry.'

Just then the post arrived, and there was a letter for Clive, which he read and put carefully in his waistcoat pocket.

'Eva writes asking me to go to Pireford to-night,' he said, after a pause. 'I'll soon settle it, depend on that. If Ezra Brunt refuses his consent, so much the worse for him. I wonder whether he actually imagines that a grown man and a grown woman are to be . . . Ah, well! I can't talk about it. It's too silly. I'll be off to the works.'

When Clive reached Pireford that night, Eva herself opened the door to him. She was wearing a grey frock, and over it a large white apron, perfectly plain.

'My girls are both out to-night,' she said, 'and I was making some puffs for the sewing-meeting tea. Come into the breakfast-room. . . . This way,' she added, guiding him. He had entered the house on the previous night for the first time. She spoke hurriedly, and, instead of stopping in the breakfast-room, wandered

uncertainly through it into the greenhouse, to which it gave access by means of a French window. In the dark, confined space, amid the close-packed blossoms, they stood together. She bent down to smell at a musk-plant. He took her hand and drew her soft and yielding form towards him and kissed her warm face.

‘Oh, Clive!’ she said. ‘Whatever are we to do?’

‘Do?’ he replied, enchanted by her instinctive feminine surrender and reliance upon him, which seemed the more precious in that creature so proud and reserved to all others. ‘Do! Where is your father?’

‘Reading the “Signal” in the dining-room.’

Every business man in the Five Towns reads the ‘Staffordshire Signal’ from beginning to end every night.

‘I will see him. Of course, he is your father; but I will just tell him—as decently as I can—that neither you nor I will stand this nonsense.’

‘You mustn’t—you mustn’t see him.’

‘Why not?’

‘It will only lead to unpleasantness.’

‘That can’t be helped.’

‘He never, never changes when once he has *said* a thing. I know him.’

Clive was arrested by something in her tone, something new to him, that in its poignant finality seemed to have caught up and expressed in a single instant that bitterness of a lifetime’s renunciation which falls to the lot of most women.

‘Will you come outside?’ he asked, in a different voice. Without replying she led the way down the long garden, which ended in an ivy-grown brick wall and a panorama of the immense valley of industries below. It was a warm, cloudy evening. The last silver tinge of an August twilight lay on the shoulder of the hill to the left. There was no moon, but the splendid watch-fires of labour flamed from ore-heap and furnace across the whole expanse, performing their nightly miracle of beauty. Trains crept with noiseless mystery along the middle distance, under their canopies of yellow steam. Further off the far-extending streets of Hanbridge made a map of starry lines on the blackness. To the south-east stared the cold, blue electric lights of Knype railway station. All was silent, save for a distant thunderous roar, the giant breathing of the forge at Shirley Bar Ironworks.

Eva leaned both elbows on the wall and looked forth.

'Do you mean to say,' said Clive, 'that Mr Brunt will actually stick by what he has said?'

'Like grim death,' said Eva.

'But what's his idea?'

'Oh! How can I tell you?' she burst out passionately. 'Perhaps I did wrong. Perhaps I ought to have warned him earlier—said to him "Father, Clive Timmis is courting me!" Ugh! He cannot bear to be surprised about anything. But yet he must have known . . . It was all an accident, Clive, all an accident. He saw you leaving the shop yesterday. He would say he *caught* you leaving the shop—*sneaking* off like . . .'

'But Eva—'

'I know, I know! Don't tell me! But it was that, I am sure. He would resent the mere look of things, and then he would think and think, and the notion of your uncle's shop would occur to him again, after all these years. I can see his thoughts as plain . . .! My dear, if he had not seen you at Machin Street yesterday, or if you had seen him and spoken to him, all might have gone right. He would have objected, but he would have given way in a day or two. Now he will never give way. I asked you just now what was to be done; but I knew all the time that there was nothing.'

'There is one thing to be done, Eva, and the sooner the better.'

'Do you mean that old Mr. Timmis must give up his shop to my father? Never! Never!'

'I mean,' said Clive quietly, 'that we must marry without your father's consent.'

She shook her head slowly and sadly, relapsing into calmness.

'You shake your head, Eva; but it must be so.'

'I can't, my dear.'

'Do you mean to say that you will allow your father's childish whim—for it's nothing else; he can't find any objection to me as a husband for you, and he knows it—that you will allow his childish whim to spoil your life and mine? Remember you are twenty-six and I am thirty-two.'

'I can't do it. I daren't. I'm mad with myself for feeling like this, but I daren't. And even if I dared, I wouldn't. Clive, you don't know! You can't tell how it is!'

Her sorrowful pathetic firmness daunted him. She was now

composed, mistress again of herself; and her moral force dominated his.

'Then you and I are to be unhappy all our lives, Eva?'

The soft influences of the night seemed to direct her voice as, after a long pause, she uttered the words: 'No one is ever quite unhappy in all this world.' There was another pause, as she gazed steadily down into the wonderful valley. 'We must wait.'

'Wait!' echoed Clive with angry grimness. 'He will live for twenty years.'

'No one is ever quite unhappy in all this world,' she repeated dreamily, as one might turn over a treasure in order to examine it.

Now for the epilogue to the feud. Two years passed, and it happened that there was to be a Revival at the Bethesda Chapel. One morning the superintendent minister and the revivalist called on Ezra Brunt at his shop. When informed of their presence, the great draper had an impulse of anger, for, like many stouter chapel-goers than himself, he would scarcely tolerate the intrusion of religion into commerce. However, the visit had an air of ceremony, and he could not decline to see these ambassadors of heaven in his private room. The revivalist, a cheery, shrewd man, whose powers of organisation were obvious and who seemed to put organisation before everything else, pleased Ezra Brunt at once. 'We want a specially good congregation at the opening meeting to-night,' said the revivalist. 'Now, the basis of a good congregation must necessarily be the regular pillars of the church, and therefore we are making a few calls this morning to insure the presence of our chief men, the men of influence and position. You will come, Mr. Brunt, and you will let it be known among your employés that they will please you by coming, too?' Ezra Brunt was by no means a regular pillar of the Bethesda, but he had a vague sensation of flattery, and he consented; indeed, there was no alternative.

The first hymn was being sung when he reached the chapel. To his surprise, he found the place crowded in every part. A man whom he did not know led him to a wooden form which had been put in the space between the front pews and the communion rail. He felt strange there, and uneasy, apprehensive. The usual discreet somnolence of the chapel had been disturbed as by some indecorous but formidable awakener; the air was electric; anything might occur. Ezra was astounded by the mere volume of the

singing ; never had he heard such singing. At the end of the hymn the congregation sat down, hiding their faces in expectation. The revivalist stood erect and terrible in the pulpit, no longer a shrewd, cheery man of the world, but the very mouthpiece of the wrath and mercy of God. Ezra's self-importance dwindled before that gaze till from a renowned magnate of the Five Towns he became an item in the multitude of suppliants. He profoundly wished he had never come.

'Remember the hymn,' said the revivalist, with austere emphasis :

'My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.'

The admirable histrionic art with which he intensified the consonants in the last line produced a tremendous effect. Not for nothing was this man celebrated throughout Methodism as a saver of souls. When, after a pause, he raised his hand and ejaculated, 'Let us pray,' sobs could be heard throughout the chapel. The Revival had begun.

At the end of a quarter of an hour, Ezra Brunt would have given fifty pounds to be outside, but he could not stir. He was magnetised. Soon the revivalist came down from the pulpit and stood within the communion rail, whence he addressed the nearest part of the people in low, soothing tones of persuasion. Apparently he ignored Ezra Brunt, but the man was convicted of sin and felt himself melting like an icicle in front of a fire. He recalled the days of his youth, the piety of his father and mother, and the long traditions of a stern Dissenting family ; he had back-slidden, slackened in the use of the means of grace, run after the things of this world. It is true that none of his chiefest iniquities presented themselves to him ; he was quite unconscious of them, even then ; but the lesser ones were more than sufficient to overwhelm him. Class leaders were now reasoning with stricken sinners, and Ezra, who could not take his eyes off the revivalist, heard the footsteps of those who were going to the 'inquiry room' for more private counsel. In vain he argued that he was about to be ridiculous ; that the idea of him, Ezra Brunt, a professed Wesleyan for half a century, being publicly 'saved' at the age of fifty-seven, was not to be entertained ; that the town would talk ; that his business might suffer if for any reason he should be morally bound to apply to it too strictly the principles of the New Testament. He was under the spell. The tears coursed down his long

cheeks, and he forgot to care, but sat entranced by the revivalist's marvellous voice. Suddenly, with an awful sob, he bent and hid his face in his hands. The spectacle of the old, proud man helpless in the grasp of profound emotion was a sight to rend the heartstrings.

'Brother, be of good cheer,' said a tremulous and benign voice above him. 'The love of God compasseth all things. Only believe.'

He looked up, and saw the venerable face and long white beard of George Christopher Timmis.

Ezra Brunt shrank away, embittered and ashamed.

'I cannot,' he murmured with difficulty.

'The love of God is all-powerful.'

'Will it make you part with that bit o' property, think you?' said Ezra Brunt, with a kind of despairing ferocity.

'Brother,' replied the aged servant of God, unmoved, 'if my shop is in truth a stumbling-block in this solemn hour, you shall have it.'

Ezra Brunt was staggered.

'I believe. I believe,' he cried.

'Praise God!' said the chemist, with majestic joy.

Three months afterwards Eva Brunt and Clive Timmis were married. It is characteristic of the fine sentimentality which underlies the surface harshness of the inhabitants of the Five Towns that, though No. 54, Machin Street was duly transferred to Ezra Brunt, the chemist retiring from business, he has never rebuilt it to accord with the rest of his premises. In all its shabbiness it stands between the other big dazzling shops as a reminding monument.

E. A. BENNETT.

BIBLIOMANIA.

BY ANDREW LANG.

BOOK-COLLECTING has been described as 'the melancholy pleasure of the poor.' We might, of course, as well describe golf as 'the last refuge of the senile.' Old men can play golf, after a fashion, and, after a fashion, poor men (by which term I mean men with less than 15,000*l.* a year) can collect books. But real golf demands youth and strength, a keen eye, a sturdy body, a wrist of steel. In the same way genuine book-collecting, the accumulation of books of sterling permanent value, requires wealth. On the other hand, just as the duffer can 'foozle' round the course 'in a manner pleasing to himself, but disgusting to others' (as Herodotus says of the dancing of Hippocleides), so the poor man may potter about book-stalls and contrive to invent new cheap objects of desire, and divert himself among his twopenny treasures. *Regum aequabat opes animo* says Virgil of his old contented gardener, and the poor collector may be as pleased with himself and his rubbish as a Spencer, a Roxburghe, a Huth, or a Mazarin, with his regal possessions. The poor man also resembles the humble bottom-fisher, the angler for roach, and perch, and dace, and barbel, and other coarse fish. They do very well for him, though trout and salmon are beyond his reach. The poor man keeps hoping for 'a bargain,' to pick up a tract worth hundreds in a fourpenny box. Such things occur—once in a blue moon. But these treasures are usually a forgotten child's tale by Lamb, or a topsy-turvy set of proofs, or a chaotic sketch of a work later issued by Goldsmith. Personally I do not covet such things, though they are vendible for large sums. Besides, it is not fair to give a stall-keeper sixpence for what one knows to be worth 100*l.* in the market. You would not buy from a poor man for half a crown what you knew to be a diamond, and he believed to be a piece of glass. For my part I never had the chance; perhaps it is as well for the poor man that I never did! But, even with the best of luck and the worst of morals, a poor man cannot hope to buy a really good volume, one of the pillars of a library, cheap. We must then distinguish between the ambitions of the poor and of the rich collector.

The rich collector, first, is apt to want manuscripts. By these he seldom means historical manuscripts, to a well regulated mind perhaps the most moving of any. They are not pretty, they are not gilded and illuminated; but who knows what secrets of the past may lurk under the crabbed hands? Personally I want the originals of Queen Mary's Casket Letters, the poisonous letters which she is said to have written to the Earl of Bothwell. Did she write them, or are they, in part, forgeries? We shall never be certain. They are known to have been in the hands of the first Earl of Gowrie in 1584. Collectors were in the market. Queen Elizabeth offered largely, so did Queen Mary, but Gowrie would not part.

Now it is not impossible that you or I might have bought these papers lately for a sovereign! I tell the story as it was told to me, only suppressing a name. In 1584, we know, Gowrie held these priceless treasures, having received them through a bastard of the Earl of Morton about the time of that nobleman's execution. In the spring of 1584 Gowrie was awkwardly situated. He was suspected by his king of intending a new rebellion, and he was suspected by his fellow conspirators of having taken to the fine arts and lost his taste for high treason, then the ruling passion of the Scottish gentry. In these circumstances he left his new gallery of Italian art at Perth and went to Dundee. Here he had the sea open before him: if the conspiracy of his friends was a success, he could join them; if it failed, he could sail to England or abroad. Now since nothing would have made him so welcome to Elizabeth as the Casket Letters, Gowrie probably carried the letters with him to Dundee. But here he was arrested by Colonel Stewart, after attempting to defend the house in which he was living, and we never hear more of the Casket or the letters. But five years ago the house in Dundee where Gowrie resided was pulled down, and a gentleman begged the workmen employed to search carefully for any old papers. None were found, but the inquirer learned that, five or six years previously, another old house hard by, named 'Lady Wark's Stairs,' had been demolished, and that in a secret recess in the angle of a chimney place a workman had found a bundle of old MSS. The workman carried them (the story went on) to a person whom he regarded as an authority in things antiquarian. This authority looked at the papers, said that they '*were only old letters in French*,' and gave them back. No more is known of them. Any old letters in French, concealed in a secret hiding

hole of a sixteenth-century house in Scotland, would deserve attention. But if these papers had been conveyed by Gowrie to a friend at Dundee, and if they were the contents of Queen Mary's Casket, what a bargain the collector might have bought from the finder of the treasure! I tell the story as it was told to me, and the moral is to look at old MSS. before throwing them away. The number of valuable old papers which have been destroyed by ladies as useless rubbish is incalculable. Other ladies sell them for waste paper, and the historical collector is not unlikely to find treasures in rag and bone shops.

The rich collector is not usually a Sir Thomas Phillipps. The MSS. which he desires are illuminated mediaeval books. These are beautiful *bibelots*, owing to the gold and colours of the illuminator and the exquisite handwriting, while occasionally the old covers in the precious metals, set with crystals and antique gems, are preserved. The poor collector might as well take a fancy to collect diamonds or Raffaelles as set his heart on these luxuries. Personally I possess exactly one beautiful fourteenth-century MS. in a glorified modern binding, in morocco mosaic. But *that* was a present from a friend (and publisher, the Society of Authors may be pleased to hear). The weak point about the majority of these lovely MSS. is that they are 'Sunday books,' psalters, gospels, breviaries, and so on. Now many of us do not hanker after mediaeval Sunday books, which is just as well, for we cannot hope to possess them, nor to own the very earliest printed Bibles, without which no real collector's library can exist. For devotional and literary purposes I much prefer a cheap Bible of to-day to the celebrated Mazarin example. But this merely proves that I am not really a collector, as I do not desire to possess any book, were it the Dante with engravings after Sandro Botticelli, which I cannot read with tolerable ease. Caxtons allure me not; yet a collector worthy of the name must have Caxtons, must also have early printed romances, which cost a pretty penny. Then he must have a perfect example of Shakspeare's plays in the first folio, again a volume which I can readily do without. Only about half a dozen perfect copies are known, writes Mr. Slater, and the slave is base who puts up with an imperfect or 'faked' copy. As much as 1,080*l.*, and again 1,700*l.*, has been paid for a perfect example of the folio, though 2*l.* 4*s.* 6*d.* purchased the article in 1781. In 1812 the Roxburghe folio fetched only 100*l.*, writes Mr. Slater. I would not give more than fifty shillings myself,

except to sell the book again : a practice unworthy of a gentleman. We ought never to buy books (or anything else) with an eye to pecuniary profit, and he who does so is a tradesman, not a collector. It has occurred to me to buy the first edition of Ben Jonson's works cheap ; but that was because I thought that I might read them. Mrs. Gallup may have them at a reduction ; there must be a good deal of Bacon in them, in cipher. Ben is not fashionable in early editions ; Bacon (as Shakspeare) is, and a true collector must have not only the folio, but the quartos. He may leave 'Americana' to the Americans—we need not grudge them these treatises. The British amateur prefers fourteenth-century MSS., as anyone may ascertain by looking at the publications of the Roxburghe Club. Many of them are beautiful reproductions of mediæval MSS. ; for example, the Mandeville, presented by the late Marquis of Bath, and the beautiful Metz Pontifical, recently presented by Sir Thomas Brooke ; and another gem, by Mr. Yates Thompson. But there is more lively and otherwise inaccessible matter, just to *read*, unpublished, in MS. in the 'Confessions of a Solicitor,' which I hope to lay at the feet of the President. This ornament of the legal profession (the notary) was hanged on August 12, 1608, and he richly deserved it.

The list of Roxburghe Club books, then, proves that the higher bibliophiles, on the whole, prefer mediæval MSS. and the stately reproduction of these beautiful tomes to any other class of manuscripts, literary or historical. This fact indicates the line of division between great collectors and the humble collectors who make up the body of the army. Meanwhile, the person who, in the first place, wants to *read* his books for pleasure or for purposes of history is hardly a collector at all. Thus the maker of the very curious library at Abbotsford was only a true collector in a secondary sense. His books were not mere garden flowers, but treasures of honey, the stuff of history, poetry, and romance.

Not being able to purchase the true pillars of a great collection, the manuscripts, and incunables, and Shakspeare folios, and magnificent illustrated works, and so forth, the lowly collector invents curiosities within his reach. For long he believed vaguely, but strongly, in Aldines and Elzevirs. He might almost as well collect Tauchnitz novels ! The famous Dutch and Venetian printers published very large editions of the ancient classics, and the Elzevirs dealt freely in pirated French literature and in books which could not safely be issued in France. So large were their editions that examples are very common. They are therefore

only esteemed when the book chances to be very rare, like the well-known 'Pastissier Français'; or is unusually 'tall,' that is uncropped by the binder; or has been bound in morocco for some celebrated collector; or, in the case of the Aldines, presents readings from some ancient manuscript which, perhaps, has disappeared. But the man who begins to collect often rejoices (I did once) over *any* Aldine or Elzevir, as if it were a rare treasure. The Elzevir Virgil, the 'Imitatio Christi,' and a few others are quite worth possessing, but such cases are rare.

Then we aim at first editions, and this taste is sympathetic. It really is pleasant to see the book as its author first beheld it, whether the type be as bad as that of Lovelace's 'Lucasta,' or Herrick's 'Hesperides,' or merely the commonplace type of early Keatses, Shelleys, Tennysons, and so forth. But since I began to take an interest in these matters the market value even of the great poets of the nineteenth century has risen out of all knowledge, especially in the case of Keats. I got all three original Keatses for some eight or nine pounds. Now they vary in price, but probably you might have to give ten times as much for the three, unless you are lucky, and some poor stall-keeper is ignorant. When a previous owner has had any of this class of book bound, even in morocco, he has knocked most of its market value away. The poets esteemed by the collector were published only in small editions, which did not sell; whereas Byron and Scott, with their huge editions, are only valued in rare cases, such as Byron's 'The Waltz,' and the Waverley Novels as they came from the booksellers, in boards, uncut. Among the poets of the eighteenth century Goldsmith is dear to the collector: and certain editions of Gray and Collins, such as Walpole's edition, and that which Collins burned in a pet, being seldom met with, are esteemed. Collins's Odes I happened to buy cheap, but it seems very seldom to come into the market, so perhaps, for once, I secured a bargain. The bargain of all bargains was bought by the Bodleian Library at the sale of the undesirable lots of an English parish library. The owners wanted to buy books more 'up to date,' and sold the Gospels of Margaret, Queen and Saint, for about five pounds. On the fly-leaf was a record of the miracle (her only one) wrought for the Saint in the case of this very book, as narrated by her confessor and biographer, Turgot. Now, as Margaret was contemporary with the Norman Conquest, and was a lady as famous as she was charming, her Gospels were very cheap at some five or six pounds. Happily they did not go to America!

As first editions even of Keats and Tennyson are sold at prices beyond the purse of the ordinary collector, he took for a couple of years to buying large paper editions of mere moderns, even of the present writer! But this craze died an early death, like that for the huge *éditions de luxe*, which were so called because they could not be read with comfort. Mr. du Maurier in a series of sketches depicted the amateur adopting various distressing postures in the vain attempt to read a book in an *édition de luxe*.

New authors were then added to the first-edition brigade, such as FitzGerald in the first edition of *Omar Khayyam*. Even the early rhymes of the present writer (1872) ought not to be parted with by happy owners for 1*l.* 5*s.* A persistent person keeps advertising an offer of twenty-five shillings for these old rhymes and for many better books. But their market value, if not 'far above rubies,' is far above twenty-five shillings.

Quite juvenile authors relatively, like Mr. R. L. Stevenson and Mr. Kipling, were next fixed upon by collectors who wanted to 'get in on the ground floor.' The plan was to buy an early, perhaps a boyish trifle that no mortal had thought of wanting, and then to make people want it. It is not likely that the owners of the Huth or Holford Libraries or that the Duke of Devonshire 'plunged' upon early Kiplings; but somebody paid 15*l.* for that author's 'Schoolboy Lyrics,' which, as common-sense returned and more copies came into the market, 'realised' only 3*l.* 5*s.* The 'United Service College Chronicle' (to which I presume that Mr. Kipling must have been a contributor) sank from 13*l.* to 3*l.* 5*s.* Mr. Stevenson's boyish trifles or privately printed skits also soared and dropped. Mr. Slater, whom I cite, says that Mr. Swinburne's 'Song of Italy' was well thought of till 'a large remainder was accidentally discovered and thrown on the market.' The poem itself is undeniably energetic, and injurious to the susceptibilities of Austria—of the Vatican also, I fear. But the collector did not value it for these merits, poetical and political. He thought that it was 'very rare,' and it was not. Can we suppress a smile at the disappointment of the collector?

In the case of the Kelmscott Press books the collector knows how many copies exist, and no surprise can be sprung upon him. They are pretty books, and most creditable to the taste of Mr. Morris, but as they are not very easily read one feels no ardent desire to possess them.

As we go back in time—to the Cavalier poets, to Milton, to

Spenser, and so on—first editions become rarer; but Izaak Walton in 'The Compleat Angler' and Bunyan with his 'Pilgrim's Progress' win the most prodigious prices. They are both amiable books, these dumpy, modest tomes, in the original sheep; but they are so expensive merely because they were so cheap and popular that they were worn almost out of existence. They were carried in the pocket of the devotee, in the creel of the angler; they were left lying about (being so cheap) among the flowers and grasses of the Test or Lee, or wherever an unawakened pilgrim might 'take one' (like a tract) and read and go away the wiser. So the books are of the utmost rarity; no 'large remainder' of *them* will ever be discovered. They are like our sixpenny editions of novels, in the way of being worn out and vanishing.

A century hence, when Mr. Hall Caine shall be where Walton and where Bunyan are (and there is no better place), no doubt a copy of the first sixpenny edition of 'The Eternal City' will be worth much more than its weight in gold. The 'Angler' and the 'Pilgrim' (while money and collectors endure) can never come down with a run, like the 'Song of Italy' and 'Schoolboy Lyrics.' Meanwhile Spenser and Milton do not seem so popular with collectors as Lovelace and Herrick. Among first editions, if a fairy would give me my choice, I should select Walton, the quartos of the plays fondly attributed to 'Mr. Shakspeare' by his contemporaries, the 'Contes' of Charles Perrault, the poems of Edgar Poe, the plays of Molière; and that would content me. But probably no private, perhaps no public, library contains all the volumes in that simple little assortment.

The lowly collector desires to acquire books of value. He has, I think, three courses open to him. First, he can collect what people do not desire to-day but will desire to-morrow. Fifty years ago the books illustrated by the little masters of the eighteenth century in France were not appreciated. If Le Cousin Pons, that miracle of a poor collector, had bought them, his heirs might now 'unload' at an incalculable profit. Let the poor collector, then, exercise the gift of prophecy, and pick up for a song what will sell later for hundreds. Let him 'get in on the ground floor.' Let him collect the *juvenilia* of Mr. Stephen Phillips—if there are any—or the manuscripts of novels which fail to-day but will be esteemed by posterity. I can let him have one or two of my own, at a low figure, being anxious to realise. American collectors may apply. By such artful prescience of a future demand the humble collector may amass things that will

not disappoint him at his sale. But it needs heaven-sent moments for this power of forecast.

The second plan for the impoverished bibliophile is to make a collection valuable in the mass, though not very expensive in detail. This may be done by cleaving to a single subject. There are about three thousand books and tracts on Mary Stuart; there are the pamphlets of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Great Rebellion, Jacobitism, and so forth; there are all the unsigned tracts of Swift and De Foe. The beauty of such a collection is that you can never complete it. I do not know that it has any other beauty.

The third way is to consider how much you can afford to spend yearly on books—not modern things, but *books*—and then, avoiding waste on dubious trifles, to purchase only one really good thing every year or half-year, or as your finances may permit. This is the most satisfactory plan of all, and the last which I could practise.

Remember that condition is everything. An imperfect copy of even a really good and rare book—a copy lacking a plate, a dirty copy, a copy that has been cropped by the binder—is only fit to be read, and is quite unworthy of a self-respecting collector. Monsieur Eugène Paillet is said to have bought some five copies of the same book, and, by selecting the most perfect leaves from all, to have made up an example fit to go to the binder—Trautz-Bauzonnet, for choice.

There are collectors who ought to be sent to penal servitude. Their idea of collecting is to buy a living author's books, send them to him, and ask him to write a verse or 'sentiment' in each. This costs *them* nothing, and, to their feeble minds, appears to add pecuniary value to their volumes. These caitiffs are usually bred on the other side of the Atlantic. They ought to be sternly suppressed. No notice should be taken of their communications.

There is a great deal of humbug about bibliophiles. In the last century there existed clubs of so-called book-lovers, like the Bannatyne, the Maitland, the Spalding, and the Abbotsford. Lords, lairds, advocates, and others were members. They used to print a limited number of copies of historical manuscripts, and did useful work. You can sometimes buy the volumes printed by these clubs; and I think I may say that in no instance in my experience have the previous owners used the paper-knife and cut open the pages. Why did such men join book clubs? For various reasons, no doubt, but certainly not for literary or

studious purposes. I have heard the owner of a great library say that he believed he had plenty of manuscripts, but that was all he knew about them. To be sure this possessor had inherited the treasures which interested him so little; there was no humbug about *him*! It is a pity that the best books and the best trout streams often belong to men who neither read nor angle. 'There's something in the world amiss,' whether it will be 'unriddled by and by' or not.

Meanwhile book-collecting is not, at worst, one of the most alarming forms of vice. It is a harmless hobby, like gardening, and can be ridden in towns, where many better forms of enjoyment are out of the question. It is not so bad as collecting postage stamps, or book plates, or autographs of the living. The preachers of the Salvation Army, like 'Happy Bill, the Converted Basket-maker,' are wont to regale their audiences with a recital of their own excesses when in an unawakened condition. I also might look at a little hanging bookcase, containing the volumes collected before I knew better, and so appear as an 'object lesson' of what to avoid. Here is my earliest error—the Elzevir Ovid of 1629, I think, in white vellum, 'with rare Dutch prints added.' Now what could I want with that; or with the same author of 1751, in green morocco, with one of those odd gilt end-papers in which some collectors take an inexplicable joy? The third Aldine Homer, in green morocco: where was the sense of buying *that*? 'Des Pierres Précieuses,' par M. Dutens. (Didot.) Paris, 1776? Well, there *was* a kind of excuse for that. It is bound up with

LES
FASCHEUX
COMEDIE
de I. B. P. Moliere.
Representee sur le
Theatre du Palais Royal
a Paris
chez Gabriel Quinet, au Palais,
dans la Gallerie des Prisonniers
a l'Angre Gabriel.
MDCLXIII.

Thus here is a first edition of Molière, and a relic of that famous final feast of Fouquet at Vaux where 'Les Fascheux' was acted, as you may read in 'Le Vicomte de Bragelonne' and other historical works. But then the play has been cropped, to fit it to the size of the work on precious stones with which it is bound.

Next, here is the first Paris edition of *Rochefoucauld's 'Maximes'* (1665); but the frontispiece is wanting. So I took that of the first English translation (the same print), and had it bound in with the French book—a miserable evasion. What, again, could I want with '*Horus Apollo*' (Paris, 1574), a set of guesses at the meaning of Egyptian hieroglyphics, with many symbolical woodcuts, in red morocco, by *Lortic*? This book is valueless to the Egyptologist. '*Les Provinciales*' (1657) is in old red morocco, indeed, but the binder has cut it to the quick. My *Epictetus* is bound up with *Straton* (an unspeakable Greek epigrammatist) in yellow morocco. The strange conjunction was a freak of Beckford, the author of '*Vathek*', and *that*, I suppose, was why I collected the trifles. '*Poems on Several Occasions*' (Foulis, Glasgow, 1748). *That* is a relic, if you please, of Hamilton of Bangour, the Jacobite poet, who died of the sufferings of the Forty-five, about the time when his little volume was published. He wrote '*Busk ye, busk ye, my bonny, bonny bride*', and no man remembers his other lays. Sentiment prompted the purchase, and so on. One might write of heaps of books of no value, collected for some reason, half forgotten. Now, if a man had left all these trifles alone he might have been able to afford to purchase something worth having. Yet the little old volumes have become familiar to an owner who would miss what he had no excuse for buying. Take warning, pious reader, and, if you must be a collector, collect the books that are, or are to be, in fashion—that is, if you do not want your estate to be a considerable loser by your hobby.

Since this article was in type, I have heard the true story of the MSS. which were supposed possibly to be the Casket Letters. They really were connected with the old house in Dundee, called '*Lady Wark's Stairs*'. But they were not found by workmen, and were shown, I understand, before the demolition of the house. As to the language in which they were written, we only know that they were indecipherable by a palæographer of experience. Now Queen Mary's hand was large and legible, in the '*Roman*' style; and surely *Monsieur, si lenvy de votre absence*, and so on, must have been legible, and obviously French, in the eyes even of a person who was not a French scholar. On the whole the most obvious theory is that these indecipherable papers were written in cypher, and were parts of a political correspondence of that age of conspiracies. Even so, it is a pity that they were allowed to disappear.

THE HUMOURS, PAINS AND PENALTIES OF A SHOW HOUSE.

My sister Julia and I lived in a Show House, we two girls together. We had reached that happy age when, with fully as much enjoyment of youth as ever, we were allowed by our friends and relations to enjoy it in our own way. Of course, time and fashion had been in our favour; ten years before we should, by the married and the male, have been dubbed 'old maids,' as if that summed up all there was to be said about us; but ten years of freedom and bicycling have done much for our kind, for they have shown to ourselves and our neighbours that there are pleasures and uses to be found in life outside matrimony, and even after one is seven-and-twenty. As to the bicycle, no sooner was that blessed invention, the drop-frame, made known to us, than we took to the wheel as naturally as the young fledgling swallows to the wing, and for more than one happy summer did we gain health and delight in exploring the nooks and corners of the South Midland counties, wandering along leafy lanes, and taking our meals when hungry out by the roadside.

It was late on a September afternoon, in the course of one of these rambles, that we first discovered our Show House. We had passed a cottage lodge and some gates, through which we could see a long avenue of oaks leading up over some slightly rising ground, and then hidden from sight. I should have ridden on, but Julia, who is always anxious to improve her mind, had already jumped down and was asking a labourer at work in the cottage garden about the place and who lived there.

Mervyn's Court was the name, he said, and as to who lived there, 'Why, there was Muster Lawson and his missus, and old Mrs. Cook, and Mrs. Buss and her son,' and I thought he mentioned one or two others besides. This was puzzling, so naturally we turned aside to see, and riding a little way down the approach, we came in sight of the dwelling-house.

We fell at once in love with it. It was an old timber Elizabethan structure, many-gabled, with a centre porch and two wings, and, as our friend the cottager told us, had been the original Manor House of the estate. But the old family had

come to an end, the property had changed hands, and the Court had been degraded and divided into tenements for the labourers' families whose names he had repeated to us. We had no time to linger then, but we made a note of the place in our minds, and next spring we started diligent inquiries concerning it.

Fortune favoured us, for we then learnt that of the three families, the occupants of the year before, two had left, and the remaining tenant, a good old widow woman, Mrs. Buss, living with her son, was very willing to fall into our ideas. She had been cook and housekeeper in a gentleman's family, and when we had succeeded in persuading the owner of the property to allow us to rent the rest of the house with the garden and a meadow attached, she willingly undertook, with the help of a village girl, to 'do' for us during our summer stay.

And now to tell of the Paradise we had stumbled upon. The access to it was across a moat by a little foot-bridge which, in former days, had been closed with a gate. The gate still remained, an excellent piece of wrought-ironwork, but, as we first saw it, lying back broken and useless on its hinges. I have spoken of the timbered gables; these were in summer-time almost smothered in greenery and blossom, varying in beauty and colour as the seasons came round, but perhaps most beautiful of all when in the late autumn the whole front of the house was clad in a flaming crimson and gold mantle of Virginian creeper. The inside of the Court was fully as bewitching as its exterior. The panelled walls, the deeply-recessed latticed windows, fitted with wide oak window-seats, the long, low gallery running the whole length of the house under the dormer-windowed roof, the forsaken chapel, with its carved oak altar-piece still remaining, though broken and defaced—all these made pictures at every turn, rich with dreamy suggestions for an artist or a poet.

It all seemed too good to be true, and from time to time we had our misgivings as to what might be the snake in the grass. Of course we thought of ghosts, but Mrs. Buss, when questioned, always stoutly maintained that there were none.

'Me and my mother has lived here off and on for fifty years,' she said, 'and we've never heard of no ghosteses, nor seen none neither.' So we were reassured, and with the selfishness of human nature combined with the blindness of the ostrich, we rejoiced in the thought that we alone had found this lovely retreat unknown and undreamt of by the outside world.

One day we found out our mistake. We had been taking a stroll through the woods which once had been the lordly park of the Manor estate, and were returning by a short cut across our meadow. It was a perfect spring day, and I remember how, stopping to realise my enjoyment, I said to Julia, 'We are now indeed in the depths of the country,' and I think I quoted poetry, when we were startled by a sound. It was not the cuckoo, nor the nightingale, nor even our little dog's bark, though that did follow shortly after. It was a laugh, a vulgar unmistakable 'Arry and 'Arriet laugh. What could it mean? As we came out from under the shelter of the thick brushwood and stood in the open we saw and understood. About twenty paces in front of us, comfortably seated in a circle on *our* grass, under one of *our* trees, was a picnic party, and if I add of the vulgarest description I shall not do them much wrong. A fat woman in black with her bonnet-strings untied was alternately fanning herself and wiping her face with her pocket-handkerchief; a man in dirty flannels had a black bottle up to his mouth; two or three very red-cheeked young women were lying about in decidedly unconventional attitudes; there was another young man, I think, with his arm round one of the girls' waists—I am sure he was smoking—and the ground was littered all about with bits of newspaper and orange-peel. The old lady was the first to see us, and immediately she jumped up, seized an umbrella, and shaking it violently at us, she screamed out: 'You can't come 'ere! there's no public path across 'ere, it's private property!'

'Pardon me,' I said, coming up to her with all the dignity at my command, 'this is our property, and no one has a right to be here without our permission.'

Just at that moment, fortunately, Mrs. Buss's son came by, following our cow back from milking. 'Tom,' I said, 'help these gentlemen to pack up their things.' The 'gentlemen' looked more than half inclined to resist, and perhaps to be insolent, and I heard the old woman mutter something about being 'as good as other folk, though they do think mighty pumpkins of themselves.' But I stood firm, and so did Julia, and Tom was a stout-looking lad.

I could have wished that our little dog Scamp had not chosen that precise moment for dancing round on his hind legs, as he was in the habit of doing when begging for food; but perhaps it put the picnickers in better temper, though it made me decidedly

cross, for they got up and began to decamp, and he certainly did make up amply for his indiscretion immediately afterwards—at least, in his own opinion—for he caught us up as we were moving away towards home, and ran in front of us, his tail well erect and in his mouth a large red chunk of beef, which in the confusion of departure he had managed successfully to loot.

It was most disgraceful. But he was so pleased with himself, and what could we do? Not run after the party to make restoration! That would have been too ignominious. And besides, what could they have done with a piece of half-gnawed meat? So Scamp was allowed to enjoy his ill-gotten gains in his kennel in peace and full of the consciousness of victory. As for ourselves, we rushed into Mrs. Buss's kitchen and told her the whole story.

'Law! my dears,' she said, 'they allus comes and picnics here in summer-time.'

'What!' we both screamed simultaneously, 'here, in our meadow?'

'Well, if you don't wish it, miss, of course not.'

And with that we had to be satisfied. Before, however, going up to our rooms, I turned to the good woman and said :

'Mrs. Buss, this must *never* happen again.'

But when, next day, we went past the desecrated spot and saw the burnt grass where the fire had been, and the bits of paper and orange-peel, we felt like Robinson Crusoe at the sight of that fatal footprint on the sand; our confidence in the peace and quiet of our paradise was shaken for ever, for our sweet country retreat had been invaded and defiled.

However some weeks went by, and we began to forget this unpleasant experience and be again almost as happy as we had been before. We had been away from home, I remember, on one of our old bicycle expeditions, and as we wheeled up the pretty avenue on our return, we looked at each other and laughed for the very pleasure of being back again.

'Well, Mrs. Buss, and how have you been getting on while we have been away? Is everything all right?' I said, as I jumped down in front of the porch.

'Yes, miss, everything *is* all right,' said the good soul. 'Leastways, I 'ope you'll think so.'

I did not pay much attention at the time to her manner, which was certainly rather hesitating; but when I saw her next

morning and was ordering our dinner I could not help noticing that something was the matter. She seemed not to hear what I was saying, and scarcely spoke a word herself.

‘What is it, Mrs. Buss?’ I said. ‘Have you got the tooth-ache again?’

‘No, miss, it isn’t that.’

‘Then what is it? Is it rheumatics?’

At that she broke down and began to weep. This was very distressing.

‘You *must* tell me what is the matter,’ I insisted.

‘Well, miss,’ she gasped between her sobs, ‘it wasn’t my fault, I’m sure. I said as how you’d be very angry; but she didn’t mind a bit, and she said she would, anyhow.’

‘But who is *she*? and what is it all about?’

‘A *picnic*, miss.’ And at that she flung her apron over her head and fairly howled. Presently, as I stood silent with dismay, she added, peeping out sideways to see how I took it in so droll a fashion that I hardly kept from laughing: ‘They’ve sent their cups and saucers already, miss, and they say they will have tea in the Hall to-morrow.’

That was a climax. I was furious, and I said, ‘Very well.’

Where do the flashes of thought come from which suddenly, though only sometimes, illumine one’s mind? They are not always amiable or virtuous, or one might give the credit of them to one’s guardian angel. I had not had the faintest idea as to what I meant to do when I answered Mrs. Buss, but no sooner had I uttered the above not very significant words than a whole plan of campaign sprang, ready-made in every particular, into my brain. We had four-and-twenty hours before us in which to act; and we had their tea-things.

I have spoken of the moat and of the beautiful wrought-iron gate which had once closed its approach. It had not been made use of since the days of the last squire of the old family, who, fortunately for us, had been a curmudgeon—indeed, he was more than half mad. For the last eight or ten years of his life he had seen no one, not even his daughters who lived almost like prisoners in one wing of the house, while he occupied the other. An old man-servant went into his rooms every evening to take him food and fuel, and, having locked it, to bring him the key of the bridge gate, outside which he had caused to be hung a wooden board with the inscription, ‘No admittance whatever.’ The

board still remained attached to the broken ironwork, and the letters of the inscription were still dimly visible. We had often laughed at the futility of the notice in connection with the now ruined barrier ; but it was to be of use to us.

Before the next afternoon the iron gate had been propped up and fastened in its place with a rusty chain, the wooden notice-board hanging outside. The old nail-studded door of the porch was shut to, and all curtains were closely drawn behind the front windows of the house. I flatter myself it must have been a very fair representation of the palace of the Sleeping Beauty, and equally hard of access. Whether we were beauties or not is not for me to say, but we were certainly not asleep. At three o'clock in the afternoon my sister and I had taken up our station in the little room over the porch, and from there, behind the curtain, we saw and heard all that happened.

We were just in time to witness the arrival of the party—three carriages full and some half-dozen bicycles. They stopped and dismounted under the trees of the avenue, and walked with all assurance up to the moat. There, naturally, they could go no farther. One of the party looked at the board and read the inscription out loud, and then laughed. I think this time the laugh was on our side of the moat. Then he searched for the bell; but there wasn't one. After that there was a long consultation, and at last a little boy was sent round to look for another entrance. There was a back way through a ruined outhouse, but he was not at all likely to find it, so we were not alarmed. A young lady, with a gentleman to help her, went meanwhile back to the lodge at the gates. They presently returned with the labourer who lived there ; but we had already secured his interest, so neither did that move frighten us.

We heard him say, ' No, I knows naught about 'en ; the young ladies must be out ; but have ye got a bit o'writing to say ye may come ? '

' Well, no ; but I am the Honourable Mrs. So-and-so, and they've got our tea-things, and we want to get in. Can't you make somebody hear ? '

' Well, mum, I'll see what I can do,' was all that could be got out of honest Hodge as he walked away towards the kitchen entrance.

But he could make no one hear, and he came back to say that he could do nothing. The discomfiture of the enemy was complete.

Hodge, having been previously instructed, promised that he would tell Mrs. Buss to send back the cups and saucers by the same carrier who had brought them ; and he added by way of consolation, as he pulled his forelock and pocketed a shilling, that he know'd for certain that picnics was not allowed without a bit of writing. And so our siege was raised and we were triumphant, and I suppose the fame of our victory was spread abroad, for we never again had any more trouble on that score.

But picnics did not exhaust our difficulties in dealing with the outer world. All that we underwent as the summer came on, from photographers, sketchers in oils and water-colours, young men who wanted to write articles on domestic architecture or who were sent by publishers of guide-books, cyclists, and other holiday parties wishing to see the house, would be too long here to tell in detail. One day we counted a row of thirteen hooded three-legged photograph machines, looking exactly like huge black beetles on stilts, each with one large round eye fixed upon us, and a young man dancing about behind, and all planted just outside our domain a few yards beyond the moat. We had been having a game of croquet, and were busy over a disputed hoop before we noticed their arrival. It may be imagined how suddenly we vanished from the scene. I can only hope that we spoilt a plate or two in so doing. As to the sightseers. One party who came while we were out for a drive stayed so long and asked so many questions about us that at last Mrs. Buss, thinking they must be friends of ours, offered them tea, and on our return we found them enjoying it very comfortably settled in our drawing-room. Another day, a lady made her way, in spite of remonstrance, into our apple-room, and saying she was sure I should not mind, she filled her little boy's pockets and her own handbag with a choice of its contents.

On another occasion we were sitting upstairs in our drawing-room, the ceiling of which had nothing above it but the loft under the gable timbers ; I was reading a novel on the sofa, half asleep, and Julia cutting out something mysterious on the grand piano, when we were startled by a distinct sound of footsteps overhead. We looked at each other in astonishment, and at last Julia whispered, 'Why, there is no room above ; there must be a ghost after all.' If it was a ghost it was a very ponderous one, for stump, stump, stump, sounded slowly but very clearly up above. 'I must go and see,' I said.

'Oh no, pray don't,' said Julia, turning pale; 'you don't know what dreadful thing there may be.'

At that moment there was a fearful crash; an avalanche of plaster and splintered wood fell from the ceiling; luckily, we were neither of us under the spot, and through a thick cloud of dust we saw, depending from above—a leg. Excuse me, readers, but it *was* a leg, and certainly not a ghostly one. It was a neat, well-formed, but substantial limb, clad in a black silk open-work stocking with orange-coloured clocks and gartered below the knee, for we could see as much as that, and at its extremity was a smart patent-leather shoe and steel buckle.

My sister and I burst out laughing; but from above: 'O—oh! O—oh! O—oh!' sounded in tones of anguish. As we looked the shoe dropped off, and with another sharper 'Oh!' and a fearful wriggle, the leg was drawn up again out of sight.

Instantly I snatched up the shoe and flew upstairs to the long gallery. It was as I had guessed. A party of irrepressible sight-seers had been shown over the house by Mrs. Buss, who had thought we were out; she had left them a little while in the gallery, and from there they had made their way, by a small opening used by the workmen when mending the roof, on to the rafters above the drawing-room ceiling. Of course these were not covered with planking, and so of course it happened that one of the party—she was a very pretty young girl—had slipped between the beams, and, as we knew, her leg had gone through.

When I got upstairs, she had managed to crawl back again and was sitting on the gallery floor rubbing herself ruefully, and two fellow-sinners were standing by. I slipped the shoe behind my back and went up to them.

'I am not at all sorry for you,' I said, for I really had lost my temper. 'What business had you to be poking about the house in that way? Now you had better get up and make the best of your way downstairs and let my servant show you out.'

Here the chief culprit began to weep. 'But—but—I've lost my shoe!'

I thought she had been punished enough by this time.

'Well, here it is,' I said, laughing; 'and mind, my dear, that you don't do it again.' So, very crestfallen and without speaking another word, the three slunk off, and we saw them no more.

After that we had to make a rule. No one was to be allowed to see the house without a written order from ourselves, and Mrs. Buss was given strict injunctions as to what rooms were to

be shown, and they did not include the apple-room or the cock-loft. But, though matters were in this way no doubt much improved, yet the immediate application of the rule was not altogether fortunate.

I have mentioned our landlord; I may as well say at once that his son is now my brother-in-law and does not seem at all inclined, even at this present time, to let me forget the incident. We had often met him in London, and in fact had been to little dances and dinners in his bachelor rooms, but he was not known by sight to our little village Abigail; so, when he drove up one afternoon in a smart brake with a pair of fine steppers and a party of friends, and asked if I was at home, she, who had never answered a front-door bell in her life, met him with the prescribed formula: 'Yes, she is at home, but you can't come in without her ticket' (she meant my card and the written permission). 'The gentleman, he did look rather put out, Miss, but I wasn't going to let him in noways against your orders;' and the poor girl was surprised and rather disappointed that these loyal and devoted sentiments did not seem to please me.

What happened was this: our friend, after being repulsed, drove away, and meeting Julia in the avenue pulled up to speak to her.

'Won't you come into the house to see my sister? I know she is at home,' said Julia.

'I have tried to see her,' he said with a comical look of despair, 'but there's a young woman who won't let me in.'

Of course, he turned back with Julia, and of course I did my best to apologise, but Julia was very cross with me that evening, and I went to bed rather unhappy. However, I persisted in our plan, though she tried to persuade me to give it up, and on the whole it worked well.

Our most frequent applications for such permissions were from the secretaries of guilds, social clubs and the like, from the neighbouring towns. We always fixed a day when we arranged to be out, and in that way we really suffered very little inconvenience, having now, once for all, disabused ourselves of the fond delusion that our beautiful home was for us alone, and unknown to fame or the outside world.

We had archaeological societies and field clubs and guilds of St. Blasius and of many other saints in or out of the calendar, and once we had the Guild of the Gilly-flowers; but that deserves a separate notice.

Who or what they were we have never been able to learn; all we know of them is from the letter of the 'Head Gardener,' as he called himself, asking us for permission to come and see the house, and from the programme of their proposed proceedings which he sent us at the same time; also from their actual appearance, for on this occasion we were so curious to see our visitors that we stayed at home to receive them.

The letter was as follows :

'To the Faire Damosels of Mervyn's Court, greeting.

'The Gardener of the Guild of the Gilly-flowers presents his devoirs, and craves permission for the Guild to visit their antique abode.'

The programme, which was handsomely printed and ornamented with capital letters in crimson and gold (the Guild must have had some money to spend on it), ran thus :

*The Second Summer Assembly of the Guild of the
Gilly-flowers.*

Meeting-place and hour :

3 P.M.—On the leafy lawns at Mervyn's Court.

I know a bank where the wild thyme blows.—*Shakespeare*.

At 3.30.—Prologue. A short parleying by the Gardener.
Of promise—fruit to follow.—*Tennyson*.

We are permitted to view the mansion.

Now went she through the chambers tremblingly,
And gazed upon the wonders of the house.—*Morris*.

At 4.30 P.M.—The Symposium.

Picnic tea in the field, members to bring their own mugs and food.

Be careful ere ye enter
To fill your baskets high.—*Keats*.

At 5 P.M.—Sports.

Come one, come all,
At pleasure's call.

At 6.30.—The departure.

A horse! a horse! My kingdom for a horse!—*Shakespeare*.

Trains leave for London at 5.30 and at 7 P.M.

Defer no time, delays have dangerous ends.—*Shakespeare*.

Farewell, farewell. Beloved.

Signed, Galahad Garland Gush, Head Gardener.

Who was the 'Beloved'? we wanted to know. Julia always says it was I!

We wondered how it would be possible for the Gilly-flowers to live up to so high a poetical standard, and when the hour of assembly came we looked curiously down the avenue to see them arrive. Presently we were aware of a little man in black; I can only describe him by saying that he reminded me of the brand of Monkey Soap. He wore a very long black coat and a very tall black hat, and carried a very big green cotton umbrella.

'This can't be Galahad?' I said.

'I suspect it is,' said Julia. 'Do you see that he has got a bunch of wallflowers in his button-hole?'

Presently the others came up. There were two or three children, a couple of lads in very shabby cricketing flannels, three young women of a nondescript type, and two stout decent-looking middle-aged men in rusty black, who might have been ex-butlers or head-waiters at a railway refreshment-room; but they all alike, as we noticed, wore wallflowers stuck somewhere about, the girls in their hats and the men in their button-holes. This was indeed a sad come-down from our expectations founded on the programme.

Still, we waited to see the end. Galahad Garland Gush comported himself with the greatest gravity. He walked up to us—we were standing by the porch—bowing three times. 'It is my pleasing duty to introduce the Guild,' he said, waving towards his following a hand clad in a black woollen glove, every finger of which carried a big ragged hole at the end. He then proceeded to make a very flowery speech, praising our hospitality, and still more, as it seemed to me, his own extreme intelligence in being able to tell us all about the house. He did tell us a great deal, whether right or wrong I cannot say, as I do not now clearly remember what he said. I suppose that must have been the parleying, and I think after that we had had enough. So, telling Mrs. Buss to take them round the house, we left the party to their Symposium and all the other promised delights, and got on our bicycles for a ride, taking care not to return till after the farewells had been finished and done with.

It was not long after this experience that a catastrophe occurred, which I had for some time foreseen, but which ended for me at least the pains and penalties, though, I am happy to say, not the pleasures of a Show House. My sister married our

landlord's son. She was so fatuously in love that I do not believe she made any condition at all in accepting him, but she declares to me that, as a *sine quâ non*, she required him to promise that their married home should be at Mervyn's Court. Probably he was just as pleased that it should be so as she was, for he is very fond of old furniture shops. Anyway, being able to do as they like in the dear old place, they have, I must say, restored it charmingly. It is not less beautiful, but certainly more comfortable than before, probably than it ever was before, and the old iron gate by the moat, repaired and set straight on its hinges, but without its notice-board, now stands open to welcome me whenever I go to pay them a visit—a fact to which my brother-in-law never fails, on each recurring occasion, to draw my attention; adding always—‘But where's your ticket?’

A. M. S.

SOME HABITS OF FISHES.

Or the courting, feeding, and fighting in which birds pass the greater portion of their natural lives we hear much from observers of Nature, and one writer has even devoted a book to the bloodless sport of bird-watching. It is not in any way detracting from the strong subjective interest of that somewhat inconclusive volume to say that he could not well have selected any class of animals more easily kept under observation, particularly when the rigours of winter make them forget their more reasonable distrust of man and bring them close and ever closer to his dwellings, that they may pick up the crumbs from his table, or, alas! the shot from the catapult of his firstborn. If even sportsmen, who walk abroad with all the disturbing adjuncts of noisy guns and prying dogs, manage to see something of wild-bird life, what opportunities for learning their domestic secrets must not occur to a naturalist of more peaceful tastes—one who seeks them in their most intimate moments, bringing to the better fulfilment of his task the silent tread and unerring eye of a lynx. With the mammals or reptiles his arts would avail little; with the fishes not at all. Only the creatures of air, the birds and flying insects, are easily watched. The mammals are, for the most part, active only at night, and to be examined they must first be shot. The reptiles, venomous or otherwise, are so secretive that the adder's first sign is his bite, and the lizards flash out of sight like green lightning. The fishes are the most retiring of all. Only a very few—some sharks and sunfish—bask at the top of the water; a few more, surface-feeders like the bass and grey mullet, the salmon and trout and grayling, and one or two more, disport themselves at the surface when hunting for supplies, and thus come within the range of man's limited vision. Cold or stormy weather only makes them more shy, and sends them out into the deeper water, further than ever from the observer's eye. It is true that captive fishes in aquariums have few secrets from those who observe them. The students of such are, however, few, and the artificial conditions of light, temperature, and food inevitably subvert the natural habits of the subjects to such a degree as to furnish the poorest basis for a study of their

life-history. Let me by way of introduction cite a single rather interesting case of the danger of arguing the natural proclivities of any fish from analogy with its conduct in a tank. It was not long since, and with perfect truth, announced that a Russian ichthyologist had made an interesting contribution to the vexed question of colour sense in fishes. The subjects of his very interesting experiments were some tench in the Moscow Aquarium. These had always been fed, since their introduction into the tank, on small red worms, and the professor satisfied himself, by pasting fragments of red, green, and white wool over the front glass of the tank, that only the red wool, resembling the worms, attracted the tench, which, on the other hand, took no notice whatever of the white or green. This was satisfactory so far as it went, but the professor was not satisfied. Accordingly, he next accustomed his tench to a change of diet, breadcrumb taking the place of the worms. This took some little time; but success rewarded his patience, and the fishes came every day for their meal of breadcrumb with an appreciation that argued little regret for the worms. The wool experiment was repeated, with the result that this time it was the white wool that attracted the tench, which clearly took it for their new bread rations. It cannot be denied that the professor's experiments established a colour sense in those particular tench. The top-light, striking obliquely through the shallow water, would naturally throw up the colours of the wool in strong relief against the dark background, and it would be folly to doubt the value of the test so far as it went. Unfortunately, occasion was taken, though not by the professor, to press the analogy of a trout-fly floating on the water, and therefore against a very bright background and between the light and the fish. The cases are altogether different, and the results obtained in the Moscow Aquarium bring us no nearer to the solution of the problem whether salmon or trout discriminate between two different flies on the ground of their colour or of their shape. As another instance, concerning, indeed, a near neighbour of the fishes, though not, indeed, one of them, I have watched an old octopus in the Naples Aquarium grow so accustomed to having small crabs dropped from above, that the brute would lie patiently in ambush for that event and receive the victims in its slimy embrace with an accuracy that never erred. In the sea, however, there is no keeper to throw in the crabs at stated intervals for the benefit of a sightseeing public, and the voracious mollusc must certainly have some more expeditious way

of stalking the crabs on the level. If it waited for them to fall from above, it might wait long.

I have some little hesitation, belonging as I do to that much-criticised craft, in urging that the fisherman is not only a most reliable referee on the natural habits of fishes, but, indeed, the most serviceable source of information at present available. Not to the same extent would I venture to put forward the gunner as the one authority on the life-history of birds, because the gunner is in his sporting moments a noisy animal, and the birds reveal themselves to better purpose when the gun is left at home and the binoculars taken in its place. Binoculars, it is true, are of no avail in studying the fishes; but, on the other hand, the rod is a quiet weapon. A skilful angler will catch first one and then another of a shoal of dace or mullet without scaring the rest, and he may keep them under more or less intimate observation the while. It cannot, of course, be pretended that man's acquaintance with the fish is ever of so personal a nature as with the birds. There have been hoary legends of Versailles carp and Roman murænas knowing the hand that fed them. As a rule, however, your fish is a cold-blooded and unappreciative *protégé*, and you may tend goldfish in a bowl until they die of old age, and never win so much as a flip of a tail by way of recognition. Gray was distracted when his cat fell a victim to its greed for goldfish, but the loss of the goldfish troubled him not at all. Therefore it is that those who seek the fish in their own haunts, for either livelihood or sport, have increasingly to acquaint themselves with their habits before they can lure them to the hook or take them in the net. For this reason angling literature teems with information on the subject; and if I ignore much interesting quotation in favour of more homely examples culled from my own diaries, it is because I picture the reader preferring his facts, however simple, at first hand.

Attention was drawn in a previous number of the CORNHILL to the food of fishes and their manner of taking it, and that aspect of their daily life will in great measure, therefore, be passed over in these notes. It is mainly, indeed, with the behaviour of certain sporting fish when hooked that they will concern themselves. Of absorbing interest and importance to the angler is this study of the difference between the salmon that alternately leaps and sulks, the bass and shark that play their losing hazard at the surface, the pollock that dives for his precious rocks, the mackerel

that sheers wildly round the boat, or the garfish that shakes the troublesome hook at the top of the water as a terrier would shake a rat. The fisherman can also distinguish without difficulty the solitary from the gregarious, the craven from those that die game, the fastidious from the gluttons, but he must always do so with some regard for the margin of individuality. In studying animals, particularly from the psychological standpoint, we make, I am convinced, far too little allowance for this same individuality. It is all very well to lay down rules and assert, for instance, that bass do not sulk, or that large conger do not feed by day. Though these may be the exception rather than the rule, I have known dozens of bass that sulked, and I have also known congers of over twenty pounds in weight to be hooked in broad daylight. Sometimes the big fish will take the bait with a rush, the small ones negotiating it with so much deliberation that one might well think their young lives worth more purchase than those of their elders. At other times, however, it is all the other way: the young fish will twist off the bait as soon as it touches the water, while the heavy fish give so faint a bite as scarcely to disturb the bait or twitch the rod-top. It has been my pleasant task to write more than one handbook on the sport of sea-fishing, and with every succeeding essay the need of less of dogma and more of hypothesis becomes increasingly apparent.

One of the first and most striking tricks on the part of fishes with which the angler becomes acquainted is that of blowing the bait several feet—or even yards—up the line. This habit, which is probably associated with the instinct of throwing ballast overboard when in a tight place, must have led to the very emphatic pronouncement by the experts acting for the Scotch Fishery Board on the subject of the alleged abstinence of salmon during their residence in fresh water, a passion for fasting which they gravely attributed to some terrific and impolite affection, of which the state of the membrane of the stomach was the outward symptom. Details of either the malady or its diagnosis would be obviously out of place in so modest a survey as the present, but, at any rate, the positive pronouncement of the doctors had to undergo revision, because another doctor discovered that imperfectly preserved specimens must have been responsible for the error, and we may now assume that the feeding of salmon in our rivers, whether they have spawned or not, is at least an open question. It is also certain, however, that salmon have this fancy

for disgorging their last meal when hard pressed, and, considered as a throwing overboard of superfluous ballast, it is a perfectly rational proceeding. Seagulls and terns do as much when bullied by the wild skua, and herons and rooks when harassed by the trained falcon. The force with which, at any rate in the case of some fishes, the mouthful is ejected seems to me to argue, over and above the deliberate intention of casting weight away the better to escape, some supreme result of terror. I have found a pollock bait blown by a comparatively small fish a measured eight feet along the line, almost vertically upwards, that is to say, in the water; and the strength that can accomplish so much must be immense—indeed, I do not recollect having found in any anatomical text-book a sufficient explanation of the means adopted. These are just the small points that the scientific texts pass over. In addition to blowing the bait in such fashion up the line, a large bass or pollock, or even whiting, will generally, as soon as brought into the boat, and before the hook is removed from its jaw, eject a small fish or two, or perchance a squid, according to the nature of its last meal, and many a time I have, when the bait ran out, utilised with advantage the offerings with which those about to die salute their slayer.

Nocturnal activity, already mentioned, is a very curious trait in quite a number of our commoner fishes. The darkness has its patrons among every class of animals—the bats and owls, the beasts of prey, and both the frogs and insects, like the moth and mosquito, that furnish them with food. Whether the smaller animals took to the dark hours in the hope of escaping their natural foes, and whether in due course these learnt of the habit and adapted their own arrangements to admit of night foraging, it is impossible to say. Mere speculation of the sort is unprofitable and inconclusive. Certain it is, however, that so powerful a fish as the conger, and so fragile a species as the pilchard, share this preference for increased activity at night. Such is, at any rate, the experience of the fishermen, though we must guard against a possible false deduction that such fishes are active only by night because that is the harvest-time of the pilchard-net and the trammel. Much of the success of such engines of destruction may be due not, indeed, to the increased activity of the fish, but rather to the friendly cover of darkness, under which their nefarious operations may be conducted with the greatest promise of success. Bass caught on night-lines, so called, are not necessarily

hooked actually in the dark, for such lines are, it should be borne in mind, laid down late in the day, but in daylight, and are taken up soon after dawn, also in daylight, and it is precisely these extremes of the day that are, as those who have been out after the Eddystone whiting well know, so deadly for the fish. I do not, as a matter of fact, regard the bass as, in the ordinary way, a night-feeding fish. Exceptions there are, of course, and a few large bass are taken until nearly midnight every summer from the Plymouth Promenade Pier, though here something may be due to the brilliant illumination from the electric lamps. At any rate, I have repeatedly tried to catch bass on well-known grounds at almost every hour between sunset and next daybreak, and always in vain. I am not so certain about the pollock, though the grey light of dawn and evening is best for pollock-fishing; and I have taken large pollock on the conger grounds with the moon high over the sea in the neighbourhood of Midsummer-day, a season, however, at which darkness can hardly be said to fall on the waters until far into the night. There are, particularly in our rivers, many fishes that feed seemingly in both daylight and darkness, though the latter seems to dissipate their fears, and the carp is a particularly familiar instance of a fish that is shy by day but comparatively fearless by night.

Another singular habit that distinguishes some families or species of fish from others is the proclivity for wandering at certain stated seasons, sometimes, though not necessarily always, in connection with the all-important function of reproducing the species. This travelling mania is in some well-known cases a specific rather than a family character. Thus, the salmon wanders, but not, as a rule, the trout; the whiting, but not the pollock. In the ordinary course, however, a group of fishes is either migratory or stationary; and the French legislature even distinguishes these so far as to appoint a close time for the latter only, the passing visitors being regarded as everyone's game. To the migratory groups belong the herrings and mackerels, most of the cod tribe, and the majority of sharks. The stationary fishes include the eels and flatfish, the wrasses and the gurnards. Those of us so bold as to seek some explanation of these journeys are doomed to even more disappointment than the students of migration in birds. As already stated, birds are much more easily kept under observation than fishes, and lighthouse-keepers, among others, are able to record with some approach to accuracy,

not merely the general course of their journeyings, but also the chief landmarks by the way. In the case of fishes we know only the goal of such wanderings, and there is no means either of tracing the direction followed or, indeed, of ascertaining the identity of the shoals under notice. Thus, huers may cry the advent of the pilchards in St. Ives Bay the first week in August, and a week later they may appear fifty miles along the coast; but whether these are the same fish can only be a matter of surmise. The migratory habit in fishes, therefore, remains in great measure unexplained. Now and again we are able to associate it directly with the requirements of spawning. This is the case with the salmon and shad and eel; and the grayling of the Rhine and some of its tributaries is known to become restless and to move some distance from its normal haunts at the latter end of March, the time of its reproduction. Somewhat less satisfactory are the arguments that associate migration in fishes with the search for food and the exigencies of weather and temperature. That both these considerations must strongly influence the goings and comings of such fishes as herrings and mackerel, the migrations of which are nowadays generally admitted to be much less extensive than was formerly believed, there can be little doubt; but we are still far from the full knowledge of the circumstances.

There are many fishes that have another curious propensity, one that observers have endeavoured to explain on a variety of hypotheses, and that is, following ships at sea. I have at different times seen hammerhead sharks, bonito, albacore, and barracouts swimming in the wake of the ship for hours together. Their case is distinct from that of the flying fish, which are to be found, along with dolphins and porpoises, ahead of the boat, and which, so far as I have been able to observe, are disturbed by the advancing bow, and do not attempt to keep up with the ship unless chased by larger fishes alongside. There is something singular in this preference for so noisy a companion as a modern steamer, which, unlike the more peaceful sailing ship of old, might have been expected to scare away such timorous creatures. Three theories have been put forward as explanatory of the habit. Some regard it as mere playfulness, the fishes finding their pleasure in gambolling round a monster that evidently means them no harm, and even delighting to race with it. Animal psychologists assure us that the spirit of rivalry is by no means confined to man; yet I must confess that there is to me some-

thing slightly ridiculous in this grave suggestion of ocean fishes sprinting against modern liners. The second supposition is that the fishes find nourishment in the refuse thrown overboard from the cook's galley. This, however, could apply only to some of the sharks; and many of those which commonly follow ships at sea are not eaters of offal. The third, and, to my way of thinking, most reasonable suggestion is that the smaller fishes shelter from their enemies under the protecting shadow of the ship, and that the larger, undismayed by the churning screw—it must be borne in mind that fishes in mid-ocean are not educated like their brothers of a more littoral habitat to the fear of man—seek them under the very poop.

Almost as curious, and, in a measure, as distinctive as the habit of migration is the preference for solitude or society. We know of either predilection in animals of every class, from man downwards. Yet in fishes it is for the most part a matter of age. Codlings and young bass are gregarious, whereas their elders are solitary in their comings and goings. This is not, so far as I am aware, the case with any other class. We do not find young owls or young weasels or young vipers of different parents gambolling together in the woods while their elders wander alone or in couples. Yet this is assuredly the way with young fishes. I should hesitate to say that, outside of my own limited experience, very large bass or cod do not keep company in shoals on our coasts; but that I never personally encountered the phenomenon I am quite sure. Old age in fishes seems to breed a love of loneliness. It is chiefly in the case of migratory fishes that we are able to differentiate the gregarious and the solitary with any satisfaction, for the diagnosis of a gregarious species of stationary fish, like the sole, would involve the danger of insufficient allowance for the suitable conditions of the fishing-ground. Pollock and conger might seem to be gregarious on a reef of rocks, soles and plaice on a sandbank; but this foregathering might merely arise from the absence of any equally suitable ground in the neighbourhood, rather than from the gregarious habits of the fish themselves. It might simply be a case of a number of hermits caught in a thunderstorm and sheltering in the same porch. The only safe clue to the gregarious habit is surely when long journeys are undertaken in company rather than alone.

Anglers in particular know the habit in some game fishes of

leaping out of water, and even the netsmen know it, to their cost, when a shoal of plump grey mullet follows its leader over the cork floats and back to liberty. This is not, in the world of waters, confined to the fishes, for many marine mammals, as we know, take similar exercise. This inquiry may, however, confine itself to the fishes, and more particularly to those which, like the salmon and peal, or the huge tarpon and tuna of the east and west seabards respectively of America, leap when hooked. Bass, on the other hand, which repeatedly leap clear of the water when feeding, or perhaps when, like salmon, they are goaded by the irritant attacks of hungry sea-lice, never within my own knowledge leap when hooked. Different, too, is the leaping of the thresher shark in pursuit of its prey, or of the launce and brit when escaping from the jaws of their greedy enemies. It is, however, with the leaping of hooked fish that I am for the moment concerned. Is it the muscular result of sheer pain, as in the rabbit that jumps in its death agony? or is it not rather an artifice for ridding the victim of the hook? Personally, though the argument rests on homely logic, I incline to the latter view, if only because the ruse is so often successful. Yet there is, obviously, something more to be said on the subject. Why—I record, as already pleaded, only my own observations—the garfish should leap only when hooked, and why the bass, well able to spring clear of the water when on a foraging expedition, should never resort to this simple and effective means of foiling its captor, is and must remain a mystery. The limits of human knowledge are somewhat baffling, but it is fairly safe to predict that we shall never know the answers to these questions. What we may perhaps learn with greater accuracy than is at present vouchsafed in the text-books of anatomy is the precise muscular combination that enables fishes to perform such splendid gymnastics. The agility of so graceful a fish as a peal or salmon need cause no surprise, but I have seen a short and thickset sunfish, weighing at the least a hundredweight, jump thrice clear of the water, like a piece of slate hurled out over a mere by lads playing at 'ducks and drakes.'

Such, then, are a few of the more curious habits in fishes that thrust themselves on the notice of even the least observant angler or traveller on the ocean highway, and it will be noticed that I have excluded mention of such as depend on some special equipment. Else it would have been necessary to discourse of

the singular fighting habits of some fishes specially favoured by Nature: the swords and saws and serrated daggers of the fish armoury, the electric organs of the rays, the fishing-rod of the angler-fish, the water-gun of the *Chatodon*. Were this article not restricted to the habits of fishes, I might add to these weapons of offence the terrible lasso of the octopus. This omission of habits dependent on special anatomical characters precludes detailed attention to the more striking anomalies in the reproduction of the class under notice. Otherwise it might have been tempting to speculate on the family history of the salmon and shad and river-eel, in so far as it might throw light on the remarkable instinct that compels these species to shed their spawn in an environment far removed from that which suits them for the rest of the year. We are by now accustomed to the fact of the first and second of these spawning in rivers, but living some portion of the year in salt water, and Italian research has latterly acquainted us with a similar contradiction in the fresh-water eel; but we do not apparently seek the explanation of these phenomena, and if we did, the explanation would not lie to our hands. Do we know why the stickleback builds a nest, and why the male mounts guard over the brood? Do we ask why just half a dozen—they are the viviparous blenny, the bergylt and four sharks: the tope, porbeagle, hammerhead and smooth hound—out of our hundred and seventy sea-fish should bring forth their young alive, as if they would persist in mute claim of an anatomical link with higher beings? Can we think why the herring alone, of all our important sea-fish, should lay eggs that sink to the bottom of the sea, whereas the rest deposit floating spawn? It is easier to multiply such problems than to solve them. The records of the life-history of fishes hold more unanswered questions than the records of the House of Commons. But that parliamentary privilege is too great and fearful a thing for mere commoners to trifle with, it might perhaps be possible to specify in which of the two cases the questioners show the more intelligence.

F. G. AFLALO.

CULTURE IN KANSAS.

I WAS never against Culture myself. It may have its uses in full-sized cities, but it's not quoted in the stock markets at a one-horse Kansas town like Hoosic (and it don't improve a girl's appearance). If a girl is a member of the Beauty Trust she don't need to make herself a mental monstrosity and join clubs to do it at. Besides, a woman's brain department is located in her feet, and so the bigger her brain, the bigger her feet. (That is the way it works in our State. Maybe in Boston matters are different.)

Pap sort of caught Culture this way. Sez he :

'Darter, Jen Cooney's ben down to Boston for a spell, and seems she's picked up a lot of learning and what not; sez she'll part with it cheap too. Now I never grudged you anything in the edication line, and ef you do live in a little Kansas village, there ain't nothing been spared to make a scholar of you. You was able to multiply tables at eight years, and could read the Bible at ten. So what I sez now, is, that ef Jen Cooney's able to learn you something, I propose that she does it. She's had the benefit of a spell in Boston, and for three dollars she'll take and polish you up.'

Jen Cooney's not my style anyways. The idea of Jen Cooney learning me anything! She don't know how to wear her own face yet—not as it's a face any girl could do much with (no matter how she fixed it). So Jen had started being brainy, had she? I saw her game right away. It was Hiram she was after. She was focusing her brain at Hiram B. Jub. But Hiram wasn't a man of the world for nothing. A bright young shoot like Hiram couldn't be a clerk in Lemuel Clegg's dry-goods store without knowing enough to come in when it rained, and maybe before. I guessed then and there that he wouldn't be caught by mere brain with only freckles in front. The idea of Jen making a corner in Culture made me mad. But I merely sez to Pap—giving him the frozen face :

'What learning has she picked up down in Boston?'

'Waal, not being no scholar myself, I don't quite ketch on to all! Jen's high-falutin talk, but she sez she'll edicate you in Browning and then—'

'What's Browning? Sounds like art-painting,' I snaps.

'Darter, ef you wouldn't be so fly with your tongue, I might explain. Browning is a *man*, some awful clever investigator, who writes poetry; and the thing is, no one can find out what the poetry's about, cos when he sez one thing, he means something brainier than what he says. So down in Boston everyone's examining his output, and holds classes and meetings to dissect him for the public benefit.'

'And so Jen Cooney thinks she can dissect him to us?'

'Waal, like as not, she can too. Said she heerd talk of him for a week, and Jen's a pretty powerful thinker when she gets going, and there ain't nothing either will stop her getting there. But that's not all she'll give you for three dollars. Seems they've got some new kind of monkey shines in Boston, "Delsarte" Jen calls 'em, teaches you how to get up and set down, and walk and eat refined as may be.'

'There ain't but one way to eat, and I guess I tumbled to that a long time ago.'

'There's eating and eating, Jen sez. Oh! she's a rare smart one is Jen, and for three dollars she allows you'll not only be real learned and booky, but right down elegant besides. The class meets on Wednesday in her front parlor, and will be held for a course of three Wednesdays. I've paid for your course. And just you sap at it and see that you get your three dollars' worth of refinement.'

'Yes, Pap,' sez I submissive like. But my! I was mad in my heart of hearts.

'I don't see,' sez Pap, 'as how you can't be just as refined as Jen, if you try real hard. Refinement is all the go nowadays. It'd be a proud day for me if my darter was worked up into the durndest refined girl in the State.'

Well, on the Wednesday, I toolled down to Cooney's a half-hour before time, and found that Jen had collected a meeting of four of us. There was Amanda Spiller, the postmaster's red-haired girl, and Hiram Jub, in a crash suit and a parlor face, and Mr. Moffat, a regular dude from Wisconsin. And there was too many rocking chairs in the parlor. I was flustered to strike Hiram there. Of course, he don't need to learn refinement; he just come to see Jen. She was looking real perky-like, and quite stuck on herself. She wore spectacles to give the brain a chance. My, I was mad! But Hiram whispered to me:

'Why does Jen wear them glasses?'

'Oh, it's part of the refinement, I guess.'

'Can't a girl be refined and yet see straight?'

'Maybe she wants to be like Milton. Milton had trouble with his eyes,' I sez.

'Perhaps it's Homer she's copying. Homer couldn't see for nuts. And he wrote some.'

I knew what Hiram was talking about, as we'd got a calendar of a patent cattle-food that gave Homer's portrait at home in the parlor.

He was all beard and bust. (There was less extra fittings to Homer than to anyone I ever see outside a dime-museum.)

So I sez, 'Well, if Homer got through his job without specs, it's the worst sort of petty pride for Jen P. Cooney to put 'em on.'

Then Hiram laughed. (His laugh is silvery—like troubled waters in a great sea.)

Sez he, looking soft at me: 'I don't know as how I could kiss a girl with shafts on her face.'

'Wearing spectacles is over-dressing,' sez I. 'A girl don't need to make refinement vulgar,' I adds.

At last Jen began. Her face was puckered up as though her braininess began to hurt. Sez she:

'Ladies and gentlemen, we will commence with a little Delsarte.'

We didn't begin! Not us! We 'commenced'!

Jen commenced this way; she called a mass-meeting of the bulliest words you ever struck. Some of them were four-storey words that had to be repaired in the middle, and then pulled down and afterwards built up again on a new plan. But lots of them would have taken a prize most anywheres. When she had run out of exposition words she slipped right down into common talk.

'The object of the system is to relax all the muscles, and make the human body pliable and graceful. That's what our Boston professor said; but to put it in plain English, just turn yourselves into a jelly.'

'Bravo, Jen!' sez Hiram, 'now you're talking horse-sense. But I say, what about this Browning chap? I ain't here for Delsarte calisthenics, if that's the new name for dumb-bells: I can swing them round at the store, without paying a dollar a session.'

'Hiram, if I was you I wouldn't advertise my ignorance like that. Delsarte isn't dumb-bells, you chump; he's a man who has

invented a system for being graceful. You see, ladies and gentlemen, as our Boston professor points out, there are two ways of doing things ; you can be either graceful or awkward. You can come bolting into the room like a hay-seed, or you can glide in, real graceful, like a—well, like me—like a vision of refinement.'

'Don't Jen use elegant language?' whispered Amanda, 'so poetic.'

'She's a peach,' sez Mr. Moffat ; and his tone was so awful admiring, that it made me feel bad, somehow.

'Yes, you can glide in like a spirit ; but we must not confine ourselves entirely to walking well, all our actions must be easy and harmonious. Suppose, Hiram, you was to drink a glass of ice water, for instance ; lots of folks would gulp it down, and a pupil of Delsarte would do it *so*.'

And Jen, with a tremendous flourishing, cocked her wrist in a real refined way, and, rolling up her eyes to the ceiling, gurgled the water down her throat. I thought 'twas dreadful affected. Amanda and the Moffat man was impressed by it, but I guess it made Hiram tired, for he sez :

'Jen Cooney,' sez he, giving her the marble heart, 'I reckon you ought to know that we didn't none of us pay three dollars to come here and see you make a durned fool of yourself, and we don't none of us need to be taught how to get on the outside of a drink,' he sez, winking. 'Give me a good glass of light beer, and maybe I'm one of the folks that gulp, as you say ; but I don't miss none of that there beer. If your system of absorbing drink ever catches on it'll kill the liquor trade of the United States. I guess no one'll care to drink in public except qualified gymnasts and other professors. Now let's switch on to Browning.'

'If you can't follow the usual course, Hiram, we'll excuse you from next Wednesday's class.'

'Land's sakes ! Jen, you've got to run a circus to suit the audience. Now this Delsarte foolery ain't no go in a place like Hoosic. They may swaller it in Boston, but we've no time here for such manœuvres. Anything real intellectual like Browning might interest us ; so fire ahead, and let's hear from him.'

'Very well. I will, at Hiram's request, expound some Browning poetry to you, having had the benefit of studying him most profoundly with one of his best known Boston disciples.'

'My seat !' sez Mr. Moffat. 'Has he got disciples ? I say, Jen, this ain't a religious show, is it ?'

'Mr. Moffat, don't be a gump. That only means people who read and understand him. *I'm* a Browning disciple. He's really awful slick, when you catch on to his ideas and the train of thought his brain pursues. The professor said it was wonderful how I got on the inside track of Browning's mind. I studied him hard for a week. I may say, justly and without pride, I'm thoroughly on to his curves now. Having brought the search-light of Western Culture to bear on the work of the Eastern poet, I will now illuminate his works by reading snatches from various poems, and will try to make the meaning clear to the uninitiate. Take, for instance, these lovely verses in the "Midnight Mass."

'Yes, the Year is growing old,
And his eye is pale and bleared !
Death, with frosty hand and cold,
Plucks the old man by the beard,
Sorely ! sorely !

'The leaves are falling, falling,
Solemnly and slow ;
Caw ! Caw ! the rooks are calling.
It is a sound of woe,
A sound of woe !

'There, now, can't you grasp the whole tragic history in those few words ? You see the man has evidently just lost his mother-in-law, and one can feel his intense anguish, likewise, also, his manly pain. What a word painter is Browning ! By merely alluding to the month of December, he makes us understand that the unfortunate woman was carried off by pneumonia and—'

'Wasn't it more likely to have been the Grippe, don't you think ? It's so awful ketching, I remember that my grandmother—'

'Hiram Jub, is this your funeral or is it mine, I should like to know ?' sez Jen.

'Waal, from what you say, it appears that it's this man's mother-in-law's, though I'm jiggered if I can see that Browning speaks of a mother-in-law, or of anything but the old Year and rooks and what not. But go on ; let's hear more. We have come to learn.'

'Through woods and mountain passes
The winds like anthems roll ;
They are chanting solemn masses,
Singing, "Pray for this poor soul,
Pray ! pray !"

(Hiram had got a hold of my hand ; Browning seemed to make him feel friendly-like.)

The brain-barbecue went on :

' Well, here it's quite clear to me, as a disciple of Browning, that this unhappy man don't get on with his wife. You see it's plain that his mother-in-law kept house and was the mainspring in his life. All this wild grief explains *that*. We realise, too, that the wife is a careless, slovenly sort of person, the kind of woman who reads trashy novels and yellow journals and lets her home-duties slide. Otherwise, why should the mother-in-law keep house ? '

' What religion would you say the man is, and how many children are there ? ' I asked, to chip her.

' Now, Imogen, what silly questions ! It's all as plain as the nose on your face to any one who *thinks*. Doesn't he speak of *anthems* ? Of course, they're Papists ; and would he be so overcome by his mother-in-law's death if he had any offspring to comfort him in his old age ? This lazy, good-for-nothing wife has failed in her maternal duties.'

' What about his political views ? Do you suppose he's a Democrat ? ' sez Hiram.

' This is a story of domestic affliction, Hiram. It has nothing to do with political platforms. We will now continue with the poem.

' And the hooded clouds, like friars,
Tell their beads in drops of rain,
And patter their doleful prayers.
But their prayers are all in vain,
All in vain ! '

' Everything is now made clear to us ; this death of his mother-in-law will mean the wreck of this man's lonesome life. Tied to an unsympathetic wife, and with no offspring, how could it be otherwise ? Who is there left to him to chum with ? No one. It was his mother-in-law who made home pleasant-like and happy for him. Poor homeless hedge-sparrow ! Like as not, he'll go off his head, or take to living in down-town dives. It's a beautiful work, quite one of Browning's finest, I think, but dreadful sad. Browning mostly *is* sad, but wonderful for saying a lot in a few words.'

' I should rather think so,' sez Mr. Moffat, who was real impressed by Jen's intellect ; ' seems as if you and him had a

regular cable code communication between you. What more do we expound ?'

'Just another short poem before the class adjourns for to-day,' she sez, with a sad sweet smile. 'I will now read one of Browning's gems entitled "Bridge."'

'I stood on the bridge at midnight
As the clocks . . .'

'Oh, by Jove ! I say,' sez Mr. Moffat.

'Hi, there, Jen ! Stop !' sez Hiram.

'I say, Miss Cooney,' sez I, real refined, 'do excuse me for interrupting you, but er—er—well, you know, I think there's a mistake somewhere. In fact, Browning didn't . . .'

'No, you bet he didn't. Why, that's Longfeller !' sez Hiram.

'To be sure,' cried Amanda, clasping her hands in high strikes of delight ; 'I dote on Longfeller. Didn't he write that lovely thing, commencing :

'The boy stood on the burning deck.
Eating pea-nuts by the peck' ?

'Well, Jen, what's up ?' sez Hiram. 'Wasn't the first pome you read by Browning ? Didn't the deceased mother-in-law belong to Browning ?'

'If the pome was by Longfellow,' sez I, 'the chances are as how the mother-in-law wasn't deceased at all—or even a mother-in-law to begin with.'

'To think that me and Amanda cried over that poor childless man !' sez Mr. Moffat.

After this Jen tried to explain how it was she'd explained Longfeller as though he was Browning. She was a sad sight, but haughty with it.

'Why, really, I can't understand such a mistake. I thought that I had brought a book of Browning from Boston, and I must have packed up this volume of Longfeller. They both had a red binding, so it was easy to mix them. I—I, well, I'm all knocked in a heap, so, ladies and gentlemen, I must dismiss the class until next Wednesday.'

Hiram chipped in.

'There ain't no need to pay you, Jen Cooney, to dissect Longfeller for us. In fact, as I see, there ain't nothing to dissect in him. He's a real honest, plain-speaking chap, is Longfeller,

who comes right to the p'int, and there's an end to it. Ef he sez a man is in a trolley car, he don't mean by that, that he's a setting in his parlor. Good night, Jen Cooney. Me and Imogen Briggs is walking home here and now. We don't want no more Browning expounding in these parts. Longfeller is good enough for Hoosie.'

'You don't need to form no syndicate to understand Longfeller,' sez I, with a bright and early smile.

With that we left the parlor and the Cooney home. It was a real pleasure to leave that choice mess of beautiful brain-food, and saunter in the moonlight with a mere man.

On the walk back Hiram told me as how he used to be stuck on Jen—but he couldn't think why.

Sez he, 'I can't feel no sort of tenderness for a lady as wears harness on her face. Refinement is one thing,' sez he, 'harness is another.'

Then he talked soft talk.

Hiram is a sure thing.

FRANK RICHARDSON.

THE OTHER HALF.

ALL of us have known learned men. They were perhaps more numerous in the days when they, who received our adoration, and we, who willingly offered it, were young together, for the ruthless years weeded them out, and some of them died, and most of them found their true level; but a picked few proved to be in sober fact head and shoulders above the crowd. Once they held forth while we listened, once they took high degrees while we envied, once they carried off prizes and fellowships while we applauded, then they wrote books which we purchased, and now they are professors or curators of European fame, and we send our sons to sit at their feet.

Now and then we see them. For old time's sake the professorial sanctum is open to us, and we sit with the grave kindly man, our contemporary and fellow-student in the old days, with curiously mixed feelings, wavering from the pleasure of old intercourse renewed to a queer feeling that we shall presently be cross-questioned on the subject of chapel neglected or lectures forgone in a higher interest. How familiar the room is! In it used to sit another don, long since passed to his account: its occupant is changed, but the room itself is the same. The walls are hidden behind well-lined shelves; books lie on the table, books are on the floor—books which are the professor's property, books from the great library close at hand. In the spaces between the books are dusty manuscripts, and grimy proof-sheets awaiting correction. Everything speaks of learning and of ample means to satisfy the most ravenous appetite for knowledge that even a professor can boast. We do not stay long, for the great man has his time fully occupied. Presently he will be sailing majestically in cap and gown to the lecture-room, or, in the interests of discipline, he will be interviewing an immature student, or he will be serving on some committee of management in the college, or he will be wrestling with the actualities of finance in their relation to the University chest, for he is concerned not only with the education of youth by tongue and pen, not only with the demolition of pet theories of brother scholars in divers countries,

but also with the detailed management of men and affairs in his little world.

Perhaps, as we wander down the staircase and through the old quadrangle on our way to the station to be whirled back to the rush of London, we may think that our old friend might be the better for a few months of life at the heart of things. It seems almost irreverent to suggest it, but can we resist the impression that he is just a little out of touch with the interests and passions of the workaday world, that he is growing too—let us choose a kindly word—too academic?

The quiet college courts have vanished; dons, students, chapels, libraries, scholarships, professors, what have they to do with this working-class street? On one side of the road a huge tobacco factory towers overhead, on the other is a dingy building, much in need of paint, inscribed 'Institute and Working-men's Club.' At this hour of the evening it is well occupied, as we can see for ourselves on our way through billiard-rooms and up narrow staircases to the reading-room near the top of the house. This is occupied by Mr. Walters, who is perusing the evening paper. Of Mr. Walters—that is not his real name, but no matter—there is something to be said. Whatever else he may be, he is not too academic; he is very much indeed in touch with the actualities of the world. He is some forty or forty-five years of age, his hair and his pointed tuft of beard are raven black, with a stray silver thread here and there, his face is ruddy and tanned; he peers earnestly at you with the fixed gaze of the short-sighted, his manner is brusque, his way with strangers is a little disconcerting, and after you have talked to him for about five minutes you will have determined to plumb his mind or perish in the attempt. Well, here are some facts about him. He is a sort of foreman in a large vegetable and herb warehouse near Covent Garden. Once he was a greengrocer's assistant, and kept his situation for many years. He might have been there still had not his employer decided to open on Sundays, and decided, too, that his assistant should do the Sunday work. In five minutes the situation was vacant, and Mr. Walters was out of work, for he has views on the day of rest as on other matters and he is not in the habit of allowing mere consequences to affect those views. He earns, perhaps, thirty shillings a week, spends half of this on rent, and with the other half maintains his wife and family

respectably, supports generously those things which come his way, and are, in his opinion, worthy of support, keeps out of debt, and buys books. He used to live in a block of Peabody buildings in much comfort and at moderate rent. The Peabody trustees have certain necessary regulations to prevent overcrowding. Only a certain number of souls are permitted to occupy a given number of rooms. A friend of Mr. Walters died, leaving an unprotected orphan child. Mr. Walters adopted the child, thereby raising the number of inmates in his flat above the standard. That is why he now has to pay more highly for less accommodation elsewhere; but he had views on the application of the parable of the Good Samaritan in these latter days, and such things as mere consequences do not interfere with Mr. Walters's views. It has been said that he buys books; the nature and extent of his library would surprise you. It has been purchased for the most part in sixpenny monthly parts, which is an expensive method but one which avoids the payment of an unattainable lump sum. When complete, each volume is handsomely bound and lovingly read. Mr. Walters once read '*Josephus*' (in a translation), and occasionally devours page after page of an encyclopædia to extend his general knowledge. He would gladly give five years of his life for the free run of our professor's study, with the professor at his elbow to guide him. Now we are getting a clue to his soul. Mr. Walters is a professor born in the wrong sphere. With half the chances that reader and writer have thrown away he would have been a *savant*; alas! the beggars at our gates can eat only our bread crumbs, our idle hours and our lost opportunities evade their grasp, hunger they never so sorely. As it is, he reads his books with no one to guide him, he believes the articles which he finds in the ephemeral publications that are issued to tickle his palate and catch his half-penny, he absorbs vast masses of information which there is little hope of his digesting, because the acid juices of criticism are largely denied to him. With all this he is essentially a practical man and a man of business, as you would speedily discover if you discussed with him the news of the day, or if you could see and hear him at the meeting of the lodge of the friendly society to which he is attached, or if you could enter into the detailed workings of the club in which he is now sitting. Once in the year he gets a fortnight's holiday. This he spends in the heart of the country (it is his ambition to explore the whole of

England on foot), and this is how he passes his days there. He rises with the sun, swallows an early breakfast, pockets his dinner, and disappears. At sunset he returns, having exhausted the long summer day in tramping over miles of country, hunting for flowers, weeds, butterflies, views, all that nature has to offer, and storing his mind and memory with beautiful things which will enrich his old age, even if he spends it in the workhouse, which God forbid !

To think of professors and of quiet gray colleges is to be caught in memory's most delicious snares, and inevitably to be led a willing captive wherever she would take us. Friendships, escapades, contests, triumphs, failures—we drift aimlessly through the old time. Then the men we knew march in procession before us, and insensibly a shadow begins to fall upon the picture, because some of them bring their tragedies with them. Those who could never be brought to see life with serious eyes, what happened to them when the splendid years were gone ? Some were mere sponges afterwards as before, and lived contentedly upon the fruits of the labour of those who had gone before them. Some, for whom a kindly fate had made no such provision, woke up to a drudge's life. Some, the animals, after exhausting fathers' endurance and breaking mothers' hearts, went abroad to—well, perhaps to drive hansom cabs in the Australian bush. Let the vision go. They had their chance, they had their time ; they flung away the one and made the most of the other ; now they pay the price to the uttermost farthing, while others tread merrily in their footprints.

The type is repeated in other ranks of society. There are wild sparks also among young working men, who are charming and gay for a while (though their time is short), and then rapidly degenerate and join the ranks of those who were 'born tired.' They live without scruple upon the scanty wages of their parents and, later, upon the earnings of their wives. Their occupation is to be out of work, and to look for the job which is never found. They begin to stoop and to slouch, and to lose the firm look and steady carriage of the self-respecting man. Sometimes they take up their abode in the workhouse and drag out their days there, sometimes they remain shiftless and thriftless burdens at home, sometimes they spend long hours between two boards which invite the passers-by to dine at somebody's restaurant, or to go and see

somebody else in the latest farce, or to buy somebody's poems, sometimes they make the streets hideous with sentimental hymns sung out of tune.

Not every man whose boots are burst, whose clothes are frayed, who eagerly volunteers to lift your box on to your cab or to do any casual job belongs to the army of ne'er-do-wells. Occasionally a good man meets with reverses; if he be a good man indeed he will do anything and everything to earn an honest penny, which penny when earned he will take to the thrifty wife at home. Such a man, well known to the present writer, met with a series of misfortunes through no fault of his own. Things were hard enough to break down the average man, and the wolf was very near the door; but our friend hired a barrow, was off and away to the country before dawn to grub up fern and other roots to sell in the streets, and somehow he tided over the difficult time. He and his like are not easily beaten; such men in all classes are the backbone of the nation.

Among the varied types of men, the man who is always fit is as familiar as any. He keeps himself before our eyes, not because his class is numerous, but because he radiates energy. He rows in the 'Varsity boat, he climbs in the Alps, he rides, he runs, he is a cricketer, and in all these things he excels. Even in business, in the office, in court, in the schoolroom, he makes his presence felt, for he carries with him a robustness which suggests the mountains or the moors in the midst of the most incongruous surroundings. The strong man always receives a tribute of admiration, not unmixed, it may be, with a tribute of vague discomfort, from the less gifted.

Come and see strong men at work in an unfamiliar scene. Our way lies down a broad thoroughfare lighted by the gas standards of the streets, and, still more effectually, by the flaming gas in the shop windows. There are some wild regions at the back of this broad road, and it would go ill with the neighbourhood should the light fail. It will not fail. Day by day, night by night, year in, year out, strong men, most of them imported from the country, are making London's gas that the world may turn night into day. We are going to see them at their work. We turn here down a side street, through the main gates, along dimly lighted ways, past huge structures which tower into the sky, across bare spaces, warily avoiding giant pipes, past warehouses, engine-rooms,

carpenters' shops, smithies, sheds full of carts, mountains of coke, till at last we find ourselves in a large whitewashed room. A dozen men are resting here for a little while between the shifts. The place is heated by a huge fire on which tea is being boiled and suppers cooked. The men are dressed for their work in flannel shirts, rough trousers, heavy boots, and wide-awake hats whose broad brims can be turned down to shield the eyes. Their everyday clothes are put away in the lockers that line the walls. Huge leather gloves, smirched with tar and grimy with coal, lie on the rough table where some are playing dominoes or shove-half-penny to while away the time. In an adjoining room is a long trough full of hot water which looks as if it had been well washed in. Time is up, and they troop out of the door, we with them, to a long gallery paved with iron, lined on one side with coal bunkers and on the other with innumerable iron doors from which an overpowering heat streams upon us. Everywhere is the smell of hot iron. The place is full of dark shadows, and the air is thick with steam and dust. Above our heads labyrinths of serpentine pipes coil themselves away and away till they are lost to sight.

One of the men, with a curt word of warning to us, seizes mysterious handles and wrenches open one of the many iron doors. Long tongues of flame leap out at him, but of these he takes no notice. With a mighty effort he raises an iron bar some ten feet long, armed at one end with a huge rake; this he introduces into the furnace, and with it rakes out the exhausted coal, which has been baking for hours. Somebody has opened a trap-door at our feet, and the brawny giant with the rake deftly shoots the masses of glowing coke into the yawning mouth, by which it descends into a row of waiting trucks below, to be carted away, and extinguished and cooled with a water spray. The heat is terrific, for other men are doing the same thing all round us, and the gloomy air shines with the throbbing light of the open furnaces. The trap-doors are shut again, the rake, red hot now, is laid aside, and the man nearest to us has seized an enormous iron corkscrew with which he cleans the boiling tar from the mouths of certain pipes inside the furnace doors. Sometimes jets of tar shoot out and splash upon a part of his bare arm, which is unprotected by those gloves, but he goes on grimly with his work. Now the clearing and the cleaning are finished, and, at the risk of sudden blindness, we peep into one of the retorts. It is but a glimpse

that we dare to secure, but we see that the retort is a white-hot tube some fifteen or eighteen feet long, about a yard in diameter, and open for the moment at both ends. From each end it has been raked out, and now it lies hungrily waiting to be fed. Three men close to us have seized what looks like a cheese scoop, some eight feet long, with an iron bar for a handle, and are filling it with about a hundredweight of coal dust from the bunkers. The clang of iron on the iron floor is heard from the other side of the retorts, and is responded to by a similar signal from our side. Instantly one of our neighbours lifts up the end of the long shovel, the other two slip a bar of iron under it, the three heave it shoulder high and run it at full speed into one of the retorts. With a dexterous twist the man in charge turns it upside down, leaving the coal in the heart of the retort, whence it at once vomits smoke and flame. Already the shovel is full again, and it is at once discharged into the retort. Happily, its entrance seems to choke for a moment the licking fires. Once more the process is repeated, then the iron door is slammed to and made fast. All this is done at lightning pace, for if the party on the other side who are charging their half of the retort get their door closed first, all the stray flames will spurt out of our end. Not unnaturally we make it our aim that our door shall be the first to shut. No time to rest or think, though the sweat pours down in torrents, and the place is like the Pit. This time the retort is on the level of a man's hips, and the door is immediately below the one which has just been slammed and made secure. Now this mouth too is fed, and a rush is made to the lowest one, at the height of a man's knees. Surely this is the last! No, three more retorts are charged, and three more after that; then the toilers hurry away to refresh their drouthy selves. They have done the whole thing in twenty minutes, thus adding ten minutes to the time of rest allowed them. Eight times they come and do this work; eight times they retire, the work being done; then they go home to bed, knowing that London's supply of gas is secure for some hours to come.

Once an enthusiastic philanthropist, who thought he would like to know by experience how men worked, laid aside his superfluous clothing and lent a hand. He cleaned out his share of retorts and helped to re-charge six of them. Then he staggered away, and it took him three weeks to wash the coal dust out of his skin.

The right time to pay a visit to the old college after the years have gone by is during the long vacation, on the occasion of Founder's Day. Some men go to see their sons in May week, but the sorrows outweigh the joys. Only the porter at the gate remembers their faces, and to read strange names on the stairs, and to see strangers filling the hall and the quadrangle, brings a bitter drop into the cup which had promised to be sweet. In the long vacation the strangers are dispossessed. The authorities, with kindly tact, invite men of the same year. After the first shock of meeting, and realising that this one with grey hair and portly frame was once a Rugby international, and that one with the clerical stoop once stroked the college eight, while the third, whose face is so dimly familiar, was once an intimate friend, the years drop away like the dead leaves of autumn. Surely there is no change in the old faces! 'My dear fellow, I should have known you anywhere; you don't look a day older,' is said with perfect conviction on every side. Threads are picked up precisely where they slipped from our hands at the beginning of the last and most enduring 'Long'; as the swift moments fly the old battles of senate house and river are fought over again round the hospitable board in the well-known hall. Ah, it is good to live again in such a past, even if it be but for a few hours, and to know that there is no life like college life!

The trams are rolling grumbly down the miry street. Mean shops and flaring public-houses light up its dirt and narrowness more effectually than the gas supplied by a thrifty corporation. The reek of a fried-fish shop drives the unwary stranger hastily across the road into the arms of the reek of too much humanity. A narrow door leads into a dim passage; overhead is inscribed the legend, 'Beds for single men, sixpence a night, three shillings a week.' Every room on every floor of the house, with the exception of a small one on the ground floor, is filled with beds. It is half-past nine at night. Down below is a large kitchen furnished with a few rough tables, a number of strong wooden forms, and one or two broken chairs. The gas flares, the air is thick with pungent tobacco smoke, a huge coke fire glows fiercely in the large grate. The walls are whitewashed and are decorated with pictures of heroes of the old prize-ring, of modern pugilistic champions, and of shining and extinguished music-hall stars, varied by vilely executed prints of stale tragedies

from low periodicals. There are men. Most of them are having a frugal supper of fried fish from the shop opposite, or of bloaters freshly toasted at the coke fire, or, if the eaters are in funds, of more substantial fare ; others, having supped or being supperless, are smoking over well-thumbed evening papers. In a corner, seated in a wooden armchair, is a powerfully-built man ; he is the 'deputy,' who keeps the king's peace in the place, levies the rent, and evicts the unsatisfactory. The little back room on the first floor is his and his wife's. She, for her part, keeps the whole place clean, while he is the link between the landlord (whose identity is hard to discover), the lodgers, and the police, who are supposed to supervise the place. A clergyman from a neighbouring church is seated smoking on the soundest of the chairs. He has already read a short passage of the Bible aloud, and said a few words about it to indifferent listeners ; now he is trying to make himself agreeable and to enter into light conversation with the men. On the whole they are more or less friendly. When he first came and asked if he might be allowed to come one evening a week for half-an-hour or so, some of them gave a surly assent, one or two tried what could be got out of him in hard cash, and, on failing, left him severely alone for the future, and most ignored him altogether. That was some time ago ; now they have grown accustomed to him, and two or three willingly chat with him about most things other than religion, while the majority sit and say nothing, though they seem to listen. When the two or three conversationalists are away, the talk is very one-sided and soon sinks into silence, so that the visit on these occasions is apt to be brief.

It is a 'common lodging-house,' and not an unfavourable specimen of its class. The men who live there are either bachelors or widowers, or husbands who have deserted their wives and families. In the daytime they are or are not employed in casual labour, according as luck will have it ; at night they return to their hotel. There are other lodging-houses of much the same appearance but of infinitely worse character. Some are dens of thieves ; others, where men and women share the house, are dens of iniquity. A few are really good ; the majority are merely dreary.

It may not be good for man to live alone, but there are forms of college life which offer but an imperceptible shade of improvement upon loneliness.

It is but a step from college to public school, for most men come up to the former from the latter. There is something emotional about those words 'public school' to an Englishman. He thinks of sayings about Waterloo and Eton, he remembers 'Tom Brown's Schooldays'—surely the best and truest account of school ever written—and he thinks that these great schools have made England what she is. But after all England is many things, and public schools are many-sided. There is a side to life there which is sometimes ignored or forgotten, but looms very large to certain sensitive souls.

A small room, four feet by six feet perhaps, with a blazing fire, lighted candles, and closed window. Round the walls are a few sporting prints and cheap oleographs; a bracket or two and the mantelpiece are decorated with chipped china; a large cupboard full of school books is fastened to one of the walls. In a wooden armchair sits a small boy reading. He has only just sat down, for he has not been quite so careful of the study fire which is to keep warm the sixth-form boy for whom he fags as he evidently is of his own hearth, and consequently he has just spent an anxious ten minutes in begging hot coals and candle-ends from neighbours, to be drawn up into a blaze by means of a duster hastily snatched from the matron's room. Success has crowned his efforts, and a glorious stench of melting candles and burning dusters awaits that sixth-form boy when he saunters leisurely back to his study. No matter, the fire is burning, and the fag's conscience is at rest. So he sits cosily in his sanctum, and is in a moment far away from the realities of life, wandering wherever Gustave Aimard or Kingston will lead him.

Suddenly he is startled by the door being violently flung open. A large form fills the doorway, and a heavy hand is laid upon his shoulder. 'Go and tell Jones that you love him, and give him a kiss,' says the newcomer. Now the newcomer is one of the bullies of the house, and a thorough-paced blackguard, and Jones, his intimate friend, is his moral counterpart. The difference between them is that whereas the one is of the wild bull type, the other is like a venomous snake. The youngster quakes, stammers, grins miserably, and tries to wriggle out of the situation. The result is that his head is cuffed, and that he is dragged out into the passage and assisted on his way by a well-directed kick that seems to shatter his spine. 'Go on, you — little fool, and tell him that you love him!' So he goes,

and the reception that he meets with when he timidly knocks at Jones's door and says, 'Please, Jones, Barker says that I am to say . . .' (he is not allowed to proceed further, for Jones has received funny little messages like this many a time before, and knows what is coming) can be imagined. This used to be a favourite and peculiarly cruel sport. The refinement of it was that it appealed to the imagination as well as to the body. The victim had to choose between the immediate terror of the nearest bully and the distant terror of the things that would follow the delivery of the message.

There was also the dreadful night-time, when the big fellows came to bed. It was not so much what they did—for as a rule they never got beyond rough horse-play—as the dread of what they might do, and the awful sense of powerlessness in the hands of the strong from whom there was no appeal.

The worst bullying of all was not at the hands of the big fellows. From them, somehow, it was more or less expected. By their prowess at football and the like they had, so to speak, earned the right to bully, and we could take what they gave us without loss of self-respect. Besides we were proud of them, in spite of what they occasionally did to us, for the sake of what they did for the honour of the house. The present writer still thrills with pride at the memory of a marvellous goal kicked in a great match by a man of whom he cannot trust himself to think in any other connection. No, the bitterest thing to a youngster was to be bullied by a boy just a little stronger than himself, who had no claim upon his reverence, whose tyranny brought with it self-contempt to him who endured. It would be idle to enter into sordid details, nor would mere descriptions explain the resulting bitterness. Let it suffice to say that before the writer's mind rises a picture of a small boy kneeling on his study floor, and praying with scalding tears that God would take vengeance on another who had been amusing himself at his expense.

One more scene, in London again—in a remote and dingy part of London. The monotonous level of the two-storeyed houses is broken only by (comparatively) towering buildings of three kinds, representing three of the great influences brought to bear upon London life, namely, public-houses, schools, and churches. It is the last type that concerns us. The particular church which we are visiting is, like the houses, two-storeyed. Upstairs is the

church, dim and ghostly in the wan light of a December evening. Downstairs is a huge room extending nearly the whole length of the building. It is brilliantly lighted, and is packed to suffocation with boys and girls, for it is the Christmas treat of the Band of Hope. Children of ages ranging from five to fifteen are there, all of them inspired with a fixed determination to extract all possible happiness from a crowded two hours of enjoyment. At one end of the hall is a stage, hidden by a curtain on which all eyes are expectantly fixed. A piano is wedged firmly in the midst of a throng of little ones near the stage, and the pianist plays merrily on under difficulties. Some of the members are going to perform a cantata, 'Golden Hair and the Three Bears,' which they have been rehearsing busily for weeks. The stage-manager who has trained the children, has taught them words and music and action, has evolved order out of chaos, has known what to do and how to do it—and, above all, has done it—is a teacher from the big Board schools over the way. By day she teaches a large class; in the evenings she is the responsible teacher for the girl's department of the Continuation classes; in her leisure hours she has plenty to do at home. But she has found time to come for the past three months to work up this cantata to a high state of perfection. To-night she will get no credit from the audience, who care nothing for the long hours of preparation, and know nothing of the difficulties with twenty children and cramped space behind the scenes. Her reward is the excellence of the performance, and the uproarious joy of the children, audience and performers alike.

Ha! the curtain has gone up. Like the Elizabethan Stage Society we dispense with scenery. They do it on principle, we for economy's sake; but everybody knows that the red curtains round the stage are really forest glades, that Tom, Dick, Harry, Lizzie and others are not the schoolfellows of yesterday and to-morrow, but fairies or something of that kind, and that their costumes of muslin and sateen are precisely the things that are worn in fairyland.

The story is the old familiar fairy tale of our childhood with slight modifications; but the story is of as little importance in a cantata as it is in a musical comedy. The supreme thing is to see and hear the bears. They are wonderful creations. Mrs. Bear and the little bear are, in daily life, two small boys; to-night they are dressed from head to foot in bear skins, their heads being

concealed in masks of *papier-maché* covered with fur, moulded to the correct shape, with gleaming eyes and terrible red mouths which open and shut. The effect is grotesque but realistic, for all the world like real bears posing in humanised attitudes. The big bear is in ordinary life the curate. Unhappily he is too large, as agonised experiment has conclusively proved, to squeeze into the third skin, being what milliners call 'out-size.' He has however, donned the headpiece, swathed his manly form in a greatcoat borrowed from a friend still larger than himself, covered his hands with fur gloves and his legs with sheepskin door-mats, and the whole effect is indescribable. It is also somewhat terrifying to the youngest part of the audience, as Mr. Bear, when his head is screwed on the right way, stands nearly seven feet high, and looks perfectly capable of dining freely upon chubby children.

Fear is swallowed up in delight as the evening progresses. The rippling laughter and the enthusiastic applause of the child audience tell of consummate happiness. Every heart thrills with sympathy with Golden Hair in her desperate quest. Every mouth waters as she eats the last spoonful of the little bear's sugary porridge. Every nerve tingles deliciously when three hungry bears return to find empty bowls, tumbled beds, and Golden Hair fast asleep. Every voice is uplifted in cheers for the escaping maiden and in jeers for the discomfited bears.

Too soon it ends, but it will be remembered and talked of for years to come. As others date the years by Derby winners, so the children make milestones of their cantatas. Some of them come from rough homes; some know painfully well what it is to be cold and hungry. Well, perhaps the very contrast between to-night and the ordinary days has quickened their enjoyment of the passing hour, and will flood the memory with a more golden glory.

H. G. D. LATHAM.

THE FOUR FEATHERS.¹

BY A. E. W. MASON.

CHAPTER XIX.

MRS. ADAIR INTERVENES.

ETHNE had thought to escape quite unobserved. But Mrs. Adair was sitting upon the terrace in the shadow of the house, and not very far from the open window of the drawing-room. She saw Ethne lightly cross the terrace and run down the steps into the garden, and she wondered at the precipitancy of her movements. Ethne seemed to be taking flight, and in a sort of desperation. The incident was singular to Mrs. Adair. She had seen Ethne turn out the lamp, and the swift change in the room from light to dark, with its suggestion of secrecy and of the private talk of lovers, had been a torture to her. But she had not fled from the torture. She had sat listening, and the music as it floated out upon the garden, with its thrill of happiness, its accent of yearning, and the low, hushed conversation which followed upon its cessation in that darkened room, had struck upon a chord of imagination in her and had kindled her jealousy into a scorching flame. Then suddenly Ethne had taken flight. The possibility of a quarrel Mrs. Adair dismissed from her thoughts, for she knew very well that Ethne was not of the kind which quarrels.

But something still more singular occurred. Durrance continued to speak in that room from which Ethne had escaped. The sound of his voice reached Mrs. Adair's ears, though she could not distinguish the words. It was clear to her that he believed Ethne to be still with him. Mrs. Adair rose from her seat, and, walking silently upon the tips of her toes, came close to the open window. She heard Durrance laugh light-heartedly, and she listened to the words he spoke. She could hear them plainly now, though she could not see the man who spoke them. He sat in the shadows.

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'I began to find out,' he was saying, 'even on that first afternoon at Hill Street two months ago, that there was only friendship on your side. My blindness helped me. With your face and your eyes in view I should have believed without question just what you wished me to believe. But you had no longer those defences. I, on my side, had grown quicker. I began, in a word, to see. For the first time in my life I began to see.'

Mrs. Adair did not move. Durrance, upon his side, appeared to expect no answer or acknowledgment. He spoke with the voice of enjoyment which a man uses recounting difficulties which have ceased to hamper him, perplexities which have been long since unravelled. He was completely absorbed in saying clearly what was in his mind.

'I should have definitely broken off our engagement, I suppose, at once; for I still believed, and as firmly as ever, that there must be more than friendship on both sides. But I had grown selfish. I warned you, Ethne, selfishness was the blind man's particular fault. I waited and deferred the time of marriage. I made excuses. I led you to believe that there was a chance of recovery when ~~I knew~~ there was none. For I hoped, as a man will, that with time your friendship might grow into more than friendship. So long as there was a chance of that I—Ethne, I could not let you go. So I listened for some new softness in your voice, some new buoyancy in your laughter, some new deep thrill of the heart in the music which you played, longing for it—how much! Well, to-night I have burnt my boats. I have admitted to you that I knew friendship limited your thoughts of me. I have owned to you that there is no hope my sight will be restored. I have even dared to-night to tell you what I have kept secret for so long—my meeting with Harry Feversham and the peril he has run. And why? Because for the first time I have heard to-night just those signs for which I waited. The new softness, the new pride in your voice, the buoyancy in your laughter, they have been audible to me all this evening. The restraint and the tension were gone from your manner. And when you played it was as though someone with just your skill and knowledge played, but someone who let her heart speak resonantly through the music as until to-night you have never done. Ethne! Ethne!'

But at that moment Ethne was in the little enclosed garden

whither she had led Captain Willoughby that morning. Here she was private ; Dermod's collie dog had followed her ; she had reached the solitude and the silence which had become necessities to her. A few more words from Durrance, and her prudence would have broken beneath the strain. All that pretence of affection which during these last months she had so sedulously built up about him like a wall, and which he was never to look over, would have been struck down and levelled to the ground. Durrance, indeed, had already looked over the wall—was looking over it with amazed eyes at this instant ; but that Ethne did not know. The moonlight slept in silver upon the creek, the tall trees stood dreaming to the stars ; the lapping of the tide against the bank was no louder than the music of a river. She sat down upon the bench and strove to gather some of the quietude of that summer night into her heart, and to learn from the growing things of nature about her something of their patience and their extraordinary perseverance.

But the occurrences of the day had overtaxed her, and she could not. Only this morning, and in this very garden, the good news had come, and she had regained Harry Feversham. For in that way she thought of Willoughby's message. This morning she had regained him, and this evening the bad news had come and she had lost him—and most likely right to the very end of mortal life. Harry Feversham meant to pay for his fault to the uttermost scruple, and Ethne cried out against his thoroughness, which he had learned from no other than herself. Surely, she thought, 'he might have been content. In redeeming his honour in the eyes of one of the three he has done enough—he has redeemed it in the eyes of all.'

But he had gone south to join Colonel Trench in Omdurman. Of that squalid and shadowless town, of its hideous barbarities, of the horrors of its prison-house, Ethne knew nothing at all. But Captain Willoughby had hinted enough to fill her imagination with terrors. He had offered to explain to her what captivity in Omdurman implied, and she wrung her hands as she remembered that she had refused to listen. What cruelties might not be practised ? Even now, at that very hour perhaps, on this night of summer— But she dared not let her thoughts wander that way. . . .

The lapping of the tide against the banks was like the music of a river. It brought to Ethne's mind one particular river which

had sung and babbled in her ears when, five years ago, she had watched out another summer night till dawn. Never had she so hungered for her own country and the companionship of its brown hills and streams. No, not even this afternoon, when she had sat at her window and watched the lights change upon the creek. Donegal had a sanctity for her; it seemed when she dwelled in it to set her, in a way, apart from and above earthly taints; and as her heart went out in a great longing towards it now, a sudden, fierce loathing for the concealments, the shifts, and manœuvres which she had practised, and still must practise, sprang up within her. A great weariness came upon her too. But she did not change from her fixed resolve. Two lives were not to be spoilt because she lived in the world. To-morrow she would gather up her strength and begin again. For Durrance must never know that there was another whom she placed before him in her thoughts.

Meanwhile, however, Durrance within the drawing-room brought his confession to an end.

'So, you see,' he said, 'I could not speak of Harry Feversham until to-night; for I was afraid that what I had to tell you would hurt you very much. I was afraid that you still remembered him, in spite of those five years. I knew, of course, that you were my friend. But I doubted whether in your heart you were not more than that to him. To-night, however, I could tell you without fear.'

Now, at all events, he expected an answer. Mrs. Adair, still standing by the window, heard him move in the shadows.

'Ethne!' he said, with some surprise in his voice. And since again no answer came, he rose and walked towards the chair in which Ethne had sat. Mrs. Adair could see him now. His hands felt for and grasped the back of the chair. He bent over it, as though he thought Ethne was leaning forward with her hands upon her knees.

'Ethne!' he said again; and there was in this iteration of her name more trouble and doubt than surprise. It seemed to Mrs. Adair that he dreaded to find her silently weeping. He was beginning to speculate whether, after all, he had been right in his inference from Ethne's recapture of her youth to-night—whether the shadow of Feversham did not, after all, fall between them. He leaned further forward, feeling with his hand, and suddenly a string of Ethne's violin twanged loud. She had left it lying on the chair, and his fingers had touched it.

Durrance drew himself up straight and stood quite motionless and silent, like a man who has suffered a shock and is bewildered. He passed his hand across his forehead once or twice, and then, without calling upon Ethne again, he advanced to the open window.

Mrs. Adair did not move and she held her breath. There was just the width of the sill between them. The moonlight struck full upon Durrance, and she saw a comprehension gradually dawn in his face that someone was standing close to him.

'Ethne,' he said a third time. He stretched out a hand timidly and touched her dress.

'It is not Ethne,' he cried with a start.

'No, it is not Ethne,' answered Mrs. Adair quietly. Durrance drew back a step from the window, and for a little while was silent.

'Where has she gone?' he asked at length.

'Into the garden. She ran across the terrace and down the steps very quickly and silently. I saw her from my chair. Then I heard you speaking alone.'

'Can you see her now in the garden?'

'No. She went across the lawn towards the trees and their great shadows. There is only the moonlight in the garden now.'

Durrance stepped across the window sill and stood by the side of Mrs. Adair. The last slip which Ethne had made betrayed her inevitably to the man who had grown quick. There could be only one reason for her sudden, unexplained, and secret flight. He had told her that Feversham had wandered south from Wadi Halfa into the savage country, he had spoken out his fears as to Feversham's fate without reserve, thinking that she had forgotten him, and indeed rather inclined to blame her for the callous indifference with which she received the news. The callousness was a mere mask, and she had fled because she no longer had the strength to hold it up before her face. His first suspicions had been right. Feversham still stood between Ethne and himself and held them at arm's length.

'She ran as though she was in great trouble and hardly knew what she was doing,' Mrs. Adair continued. 'Did you cause that trouble?'

'Yes.'

'I thought so from what I heard you say.'

Mrs. Adair wanted to hurt, and, in spite of Durrance's impenetrable face, she felt that she had succeeded. It was a small sort

of compensation for the weeks of mortification which she had endured. There is something which might be said for Mrs. Adair, extenuations might be pleaded even if no defence was made. For she, like Ethne, was overtaxed that night. That calm pale face of hers hid the quick passions of the south, and she had been racked by them to the limits of endurance. There had been something grotesque, something rather horrible in that outbreak and confession by Durrance after Ethne had fled from the room. He was speaking out his heart to an empty chair. She herself had stood outside the window with a bitter longing that he had spoken so to her and a bitter knowledge that he never would. She was sunk deep in humiliation. The irony of the position tortured her; it was like a jest of grim selfish gods played off upon mortals to their hurt. And at the bottom of all her thoughts rankled that memory of the extinguished lamp and the low hushed voices speaking one to the other in darkness. Therefore she spoke to give pain, and was glad that she gave it, even though it was to the man whom she coveted.

‘There’s one thing which I don’t understand,’ said Durrance. ‘I mean the change which we both noticed in Ethne to-night. I mistook the cause of it. I was a fool. But there must have been a cause. The gift of laughter had been restored to her. She became just what she was five years ago.’

‘Exactly,’ Mrs. Adair answered. ‘Just what she was before Mr. Feversham disappeared from Ramelton. You are so quick, Colonel Durrance. Ethne had good news of Mr. Feversham this morning.’

Durrance turned quickly towards her, and Mrs. Adair felt a keen pleasure at his abrupt movement. She had provoked the display of some emotion, and the display of any emotion was preferable to his composure.

‘Are you quite sure?’ he asked.

‘As sure as that you gave her bad news to-night,’ she replied.

But Durrance did not need the answer. Ethne had made another slip that evening, and, though unnoticed at the time, it came back to Durrance’s memory now. She had declared that Feversham still drew an allowance from his father. ‘I heard it only to-day,’ she had said.

‘Yes, Ethne heard news of Feversham to-day,’ he said slowly. ‘Did she make a mistake five years ago? There was some wrong thing Harry Feversham was supposed to have done. But was

there really more misunderstanding than wrong? Did she mis-judge him? Has she to-day learnt that she misjudged him?

'I will tell you what I know. It is not very much. But I think it is fair that you should know it.'

'Wait a moment, please, Mrs. Adair,' said Durrance sharply. He had put his questions rather to himself than to his companion, and he was not sure that he wished her to answer them. He walked abruptly away from her and leaned upon the balustrade with his face towards the garden.

It seemed to him rather treacherous to allow Mrs. Adair to disclose what Ethne herself evidently intended to conceal. But he knew why Ethne wished to conceal it. She wished him never to suspect that she retained any love for Harry Feversham. On the other hand, however, he did not falter from his own belief. Marriage between a man crippled like himself and a woman active and vigorous like Ethne could never be right unless both brought more than friendship. Here disloyalty seemed the truest loyalty of all. He turned back to Mrs. Adair.

'Tell me what you know, Mrs. Adair. Something might be done perhaps for Feversham. From Assouan or Suakin something might be done. This news—this good news came, I suppose, this afternoon when I was at home.'

'No, this morning when you were here. It was brought by a Captain Willoughby, who was once an officer in Mr. Feversham's regiment.'

'He is now Deputy-Governor of Suakin,' said Durrance. 'I know the man. For three years we were together in that town. And he brought the news of Feversham? Well?'

'He sailed down from Kingsbridge. You and Ethne were walking across the lawn when he landed from the creek. Ethne left you and went forward to meet him. I saw them meet, because I happened to be looking out of this window at the moment.'

'Yes, Ethne went forward. There was a stranger whom she did not know. I remember.'

'They spoke for a few moments, and then Ethne led him towards the trees at once, without looking back. They went together into the little enclosed garden on the bank,' and Durrance started as she spoke. 'Yes, you followed them,' continued Mrs. Adair curiously. She had been puzzled as to how Durrance had failed to find them there.

'They were there then,' he said slowly, 'on that seat, in the enclosure, all the while.'

Mrs. Adair waited for a more definite explanation of the mystery, but she got none.

'Well?' he asked.

'They stayed there for a long while. You had gone home across the fields before they came outside into the open. I was in the garden and indeed happened to be actually upon the bank.'

'So you saw Captain Willoughby? Perhaps you spoke to him?'

'Yes. Ethne introduced him; but she would not let him stay. She hurried him into his boat and back to Kingsbridge at once.'

'Then how do you know Captain Willoughby brought good news of Harry Feversham?'

'Ethne told me that they had been talking of him. Her manner and her laugh showed me no less clearly that the news was good.'

'Yes,' said Durrance; and he nodded his head in assent. Captain Willoughby's tidings had given to Ethne that new pride and buoyancy which he had so readily taken to himself. Signs of the necessary something more than friendship—so he had accounted them; and he was right so far. But it was not he who had inspired them. His very penetration and insight had led him astray. He was silent for a few minutes, and Mrs. Adair searched his face in the moonlight for some evidence that he resented Ethne's secrecy. But she searched in vain.

'And that is all?' said Durrance.

'Not quite. Captain Willoughby brought a token from Mr. Feversham. Ethne carried it back to the house in her hand. Her eyes were upon it all the way; her lips smiled at it. I do not think there is anything so precious to her in all the world.'

'A token?'

'A little white feather,' said Mrs. Adair, 'all soiled and speckled with dust. Can you read the riddle of that feather?'

'Not yet,' Durrance replied. He walked once or twice along the terrace and back, lost in thought. Then he went into the house and fetched his cap from the hall. He came back to Mrs. Adair.

'It was kind of you to have told me this,' he said. 'I want you to add to your kindness. When I was in the drawing-room

alone, and you came to the window, how much did you hear? What were the first words?

Mrs. Adair's answer relieved him of a fear. Ethne had heard nothing whatever of his confession.

'Yes,' he said, 'she moved to the window to read a letter by the moonlight. She must have escaped from the room the moment she had read it. Consequently she did not hear that I had no longer any hope of recovering my sight, and that I merely used the pretence as a hope in order to delay our marriage. I am glad of that—very glad.' He shook hands with Mrs. Adair and said good-night. 'You see,' he added absently, 'if I hear that Harry Feversham is in Omdurman something might perhaps be done—from Suakin or Assouan something might be done. Which way did Ethne go?'

'Over to the water.'

'She had her dog with her, I hope?'

'The dog followed her,' said Mrs. Adair.

'I am glad,' said Durrance. He knew quite well what comfort the dog would be to Ethne in this bad hour; and perhaps he rather envied the dog. Mrs. Adair wondered that at a moment of such distress to him he could still spare a thought for so small an alleviation of Ethne's trouble. She watched him cross the garden to the stile in the hedge. He walked steadily forward upon the path like a man who sees. There was nothing in his gait or bearing to reveal that the one thing left to him had that evening been taken away.

CHAPTER XX.

EAST AND WEST.

DURRANCE found his body-servant waiting up for him when he had come across the fields to his own house of Guessens.

'You can turn the lights out and go to bed,' said Durrance; and he walked through the hall into his study. The name hardly described the room, for it had always been more of a gun-room than a study.

He sat for some while in his chair, and then began to walk gently about the room in the dark. There were many cups and goblets scattered about the room which Durrance had won in his

past days. He knew them each one by their shape and position, and he drew a kind of comfort from the feel of them. He took them up one by one and touched them and fondled them, wondering whether, now that he was blind, they were kept as clean and bright as they used to be. This one, a thin-stemmed goblet, he had won in a regimental steeplechase at Colchester ; he could remember the day, with its clouds and grey sky, and the dull look of the ploughed fields between the hedges. That pewter which stood upon his writing-table, and which had formed a convenient holder for his pens, he had acquired very long ago in his college 'fours' when he was a freshman at Oxford. The hoof of a favourite horse mounted in silver stood as an ornament upon the mantelpiece. His trophies made the room a gigantic diary. He fingered his records of good days gone by, and came at last to his guns and rifles.

He took them down from their racks. They were to him much what Ethne's violin was to her, and had stories for his ear alone. He sat with a Remington across his knees and lived over again one long hot day in the hills to the west of Berenice, during which he had stalked a lion across stony open country and killed him at three hundred yards just before sunset. Another talked to him, too, of his first ibex, shot in the Khor Baraka, and of antelope stalked among the mountains northwards of Suakin. There was a little Greener gun which he had used upon mid-winter nights in a boat upon this very creek of the Salecombe estuary. He had brought down his first mallard with that ; and he lifted it and slid his left hand along the under side of the barrel, and felt the butt settle comfortably into the hollow of his shoulder. But his weapons began to talk over-loudly in his ears, even as Ethne's violin, in the earlier days after Harry Feversham was gone and she was left alone, had spoken with too penetrating a note to her. As he handled the locks and was aware that he could no longer see the sights the sum of his losses was presented to him in a very definite and incontestable way.

He put his guns away, and was seized suddenly with a desire to disregard his blindness—to pretend that it was no hindrance, and to pretend so hard that it should prove not to be one. The desire grew and shook him like a passion, and carried him winged out of the countries of dim stars straight to the East. The smell of the East and its noises, and the domes of its mosques, the hot sun, the rabble in its streets, and the steel-blue sky overhead caught

at him till he was plucked from his chair and set pacing restlessly about his room.

He dreamed himself to Port Said, and was marshalled in the long procession of steamers down the waterway of the Canal. The song of the Arabs coaling the ship was in his ears, and so loud that he could see them as they went at night-time up and down the planks between the barges and the ship's deck—an endless chain of naked figures monotonously chanting, and lurid in the red glare of the braziers. He travelled out of the Canal, past the red headlands of the Sinaitic peninsula, into the chills of the Gulf of Suez. He zigzagged down the Red Sea, while the Great Bear swung northwards low down in the sky above the rail of the quarterdeck, and the Southern Cross began to blaze in the south. He touched at Tor and at Yambo; he saw the tall white houses of Yeddah lift themselves out of the sea, and admired the dark, brine-withered woodwork of their carved casements; he walked through the dusk of its roofed bazaars with the joy of the homesick after long years come home; and from Yeddah he crossed between the narrowing coral reefs into the land-locked harbour of Suakin.

Westward from Suakin stretched the desert, with all that it meant to this man whom it had smitten and cast out—the quiet padding of camels' feet in sand, the great rock-cones rising sheer and abrupt as from a rippleless ocean, towards which you march all day and get no nearer; the gorgeous momentary blaze of sunset colours in the west, the rustle of the wind through the short twilight when the west is a pure pale green and the east the darkest blue, and the downward swoop of the planets out of nothing to the earth. The inheritor of the other places dreamed himself back into his inheritance as he tramped to and fro, forgetful of his blindness and parched with desire as with a fever, until unexpectedly he heard the blackbirds and the swallows bustling and piping in the garden, and knew that outside his windows the world was white with dawn.

He waked from his dream at the homely sound. There were to be no more journeys for him; affliction had caged him and soldered a chain about his leg. He felt his way by the balustrade up the stairs to his bed. He fell asleep as the sun rose.

But at Dongola, on the great curve of the Nile southwards of Wadi Halfa, the sun was already blazing, and its inhabitants were

awake. There was sport prepared for them this morning under the few palm trees before the house of the Emir Wad El Nejoumi. A white prisoner, captured a week before close to the wells of El Agia on the great Arbain road by a party of Arabs, had been brought in during the night, and now awaited his fate at the Emir's hands. The news spread quick as a spark through the town ; already a crowd of men and women and children flocked to this rare and pleasant spectacle. In front of the palm trees an open space stretched to the gateway of the Emir's house ; behind them a slope of sand descended flat and bare to the river.

Harry Feversham was standing under the trees, guarded by four of the Ansar soldiery. His clothes had been stripped from him ; he worn only a torn and ragged jibbeh upon his body and a twist of cotton on his head to shield him from the sun ; his bare shoulders and arms were scorched and blistered. His ankles were fettered ; his wrists were bound with a rope of palm fibre ; an iron collar was locked about his neck, to which a chain was attached ; and this chain one of the soldiers held. He stood and smiled at the mocking crowd about him, and seemed well pleased, like a lunatic.

That was the character which he had assumed. If he could sustain it, if he could baffle his captors so that they were at a loss whether he was a man really daft or an agent with promises of help and arms to the disaffected tribes of Kordofan, then there was a chance that they might fear to dispose of him themselves and send him forward to Omdurman. But it was hard work. Inside the house the Emir and his counsellors were debating his destiny ; on the river bank, and within his view, a high gallows stood out black and most sinister against the yellow sand. Harry Feversham was very glad of the chain about his neck and the fetters on his legs. They helped him to betray no panic, by assuring him of its futility.

These hours of waiting, while the sun rose higher and higher, and no one came from the gateway, were the worst he had ever as yet endured. All through that fortnight in Berber a hope of escape had sustained him, and when the lantern shone upon him from behind in the ruined acres, what had to be done must be done so quickly there was no time for fear or thought. Here there was time and too much of it.

He had time to anticipate and foresee. He felt his heart sinking till he was faint, just as in those distant days when he

had heard the hounds scuffling and whimpering in a covert and he himself had sat shaking upon his horse. He glanced furtively towards the gallows, and foresaw the vultures perched upon his shoulders, fluttering about his eyes. But the man had grown during his years of probation. The fear of physical suffering was not uppermost in his mind, nor even the fear that he would walk unmanfully to the high gallows, but a greater dread—that if he died now, here, at Dongola, Ethne would never take back that fourth feather, and his strong hope of the afterwards would never come to its fulfilment. He was very glad of the collar about his neck and the fetters on his legs. He summoned his wits together, and, standing there alone, without a companion to share his miseries, laughed and scraped and grimaced at his tormentors.

An old hag danced and gesticulated before him, singing the while a monotonous song. The gestures were pantomimic, and menaced him with abominable mutilations. The words described in simple and unexpurgated language the grievous death-agonies which immediately awaited him and the eternity of torture in hell which he would subsequently suffer. Feversham understood, and inwardly shuddered; but he only imitated her gestures, and nodded and mowed at her as though she was singing to him of Paradise. Others, taking their war trumpets, placed the mouths against the prisoner's ears and blew with all their might.

‘Do you hear, Kaffir?’ cried a child, dancing with delight before him. ‘Do you hear our ombezeyhs? Blow louder! Blow louder!’

But the prisoner only clapped his hands and cried out that the music was good.

Finally there came to the group a tall warrior with a long heavy spear. A cry was raised at his approach and a space was cleared. He stood before the captive and poised his spear, swinging it backwards and forwards, to make his arm supple before he thrust, like a bowler before he delivers a ball at a cricket match. Feversham glanced wildly about him, and seeing no escape, suddenly flung out his breast to meet the blow. But the spear never reached him. For as the warrior lunged from the shoulder, one of the four guards jerked the neck chain violently from behind, and the prisoner was flung half throttled upon his back. Three times, and each time to a roar of delight, this pastime was repeated, and then a soldier appeared in the gateway of Nejoumi's house.

'Bring the Kaffir in!' he cried, and, followed by the curses and threats of the crowd, the prisoner was dragged under the arch across a courtyard into a dark room.

For a few moments Feversham could see nothing. Then his eyes began to adapt themselves to the gloom, and he distinguished a tall bearded man, who sat upon an angareb (the native bedstead of the Soudan), and two others, who squatted beside him on the ground. The man on the angareb was the Emir.

'You are a spy of the Government from Wadi Halfa,' he said.

'No, I am a musician,' returned the prisoner, and he laughed happily like a man that has made a jest.

Nejoumi made a sign, and an instrument with many broken strings was handed to the captive. Feversham seated himself upon the ground, and with slow fumbling fingers, breathing hard as he bent over the zither, he began to elicit a wavering melody. It was the melody to which Durrance had listened in the street of Tewfikieh on the eve of his last journey into the desert; and which Ethne Eustace had played only the night before in the quiet drawing-room at Southpool. It was the only melody which Feversham knew. When he had done Nejoumi began again.

'You are a spy.'

'I have told you the truth,' answered Feversham stubbornly, and Nejoumi took a different tone. He called for food, and the raw liver of a camel covered with salt and red pepper was placed before Feversham. Seldom has a man had smaller inclination to eat, but Feversham ate none the less even of that unattractive dish, knowing well that reluctance would be construed as fear, and that the signs of fear might condemn him to death. And while he ate Nejoumi questioned him in the silkiest voice about the fortifications of Cairo and the strength of the garrison at Assouan, and the rumours of dissension between the Khedive and the Sirdar.

But to each question Feversham replied :

'How should a Greek know of these matters?'

Nejoumi rose from his angareb and roughly gave an order. The soldiers seized upon Feversham and dragged him out again into the sunlight. They poured water upon the palm-rope which bound his wrists, so that the thongs swelled and bit into his flesh.

'Speak, Kaffir. You carry promises to Kordofan.'

Feversham was silent. He clung doggedly to the plan over

which he had so long and so carefully pondered. He could not improve upon it, he was sure, by any alteration suggested by fear at a moment when he could not think clearly. A rope was flung about his neck and he was pushed and driven beneath the gallows.

'Speak, Kaffir,' said Nejoumi, 'so shall you escape death.'

Feversham smiled and grimaced, and shook his head loosely from side to side. It was astonishing to him that he could do it, that he did not fall down upon his knees and beg for mercy. It was still more astonishing to him that he felt no temptation so to demean himself. He wondered whether the oft-repeated story was true, that criminals in English prisons went quietly and with dignity to the scaffold because they had been drugged. For without drugs he seemed to be behaving with no less dignity himself. His heart was beating very fast, but it was with a sort of excitement. He did not even think of Ethne at that moment; and certainly the great dread that his strong hope would never be fulfilled did not trouble him at all. He had his allotted part to play, and he just played it; and that was all.

Nejoumi looked at him sourly for a moment. He turned to the men who stood ready to draw away from Feversham the angareb on which he was placed.

'To-morrow,' said he, 'the Kaffir shall go to Omdurman.'

Feversham began to feel then that the rope of palm-fibre tortured his wrists.

CHAPTER XXI.

MRS. ADAIR INTERVENES.

MRS. ADAIR speculated with some uneasiness upon the consequences of the disclosures which she had made to Durrance. She was in doubt as to the course which he would take. It seemed possible that he might frankly tell Ethne of the mistake which he had made. He might admit that he had discovered the unreality of her affection for him, and the reality of her love for Feversham, and if he made that admission, however carefully he tried to conceal her share in his discovery, he would hardly succeed. She would have to face Ethne, and she dreaded the moment when her companion's frank eyes would rest quietly upon hers, and her lips demand an explanation. It was consequently

a relief to her at first that no outward change was visible in the relations of Ethne and Durrance. They met and spoke as though that day on which Willoughby had landed at the garden, and the evening when Ethne had played the Musoline overture upon the violin, had been blotted from their experience. Mrs. Adair was relieved at first, but when the sense of personal danger passed from her, and she saw that her interference had been apparently without effect, she began to be puzzled. A little while, and she was both angry and disappointed.

Durrance, indeed, quickly made up his mind. Ethne wished him not to know, it was some consolation to her in her distress to believe that she had brought happiness to this one man whose friend she genuinely was. And of that consolation Durrance was aware. He saw no reason to destroy it—for the present. He must know certainly whether a misunderstanding or an irreparable breach separated Ethne from Feversham before he took the steps he had in mind. He must have sure knowledge too of Harry Feversham's fate. Therefore he pretended to know nothing; he abandoned even his habit of attention and scrutiny, since for these there was no longer any need; he forced himself to a display of contentment; he made light of his misfortune, and professed to find in Ethne's company more than its compensation.

'You see,' he said to her, 'one can get used to blindness and take it as the natural thing. But one does not get used to you, Ethne. Each time one meets you, one discovers something new and fresh to delight one. Besides there is always the possibility of a cure.'

He had his reward, for Ethne understood that he had laid aside his suspicions, and she was able to set off his indefatigable cheerfulness against her own misery. And her misery was great. If for one day she had recaptured the lightness of heart which had been hers before the three white feathers came to Ramelton, she had now recaptured something of the grief which followed upon their coming. A difference there was, of course. Her pride was restored, and she had a faint hope born of Durrance's words that Harry after all might perhaps be rescued. But she knew again the long and sleepless nights and the dull hot misery of the head as she waited for the grey of the morning. For she could no longer pretend to herself that she looked upon Harry Feversham as a friend who was dead. He was living, and in

what straits she dreaded to think, and yet thirsted to know. At rare times, indeed, her impatience got the better of her will.

'I suppose that escape is possible from Omdurman,' she said one day, constraining her voice to an accent of indifference.

'Possible? Yes, I think so,' Durrance answered cheerfully. 'Of course, it is difficult and would in any case take time. Attempts, for instance, have been made to get Trench out and others, but the attempts have not yet succeeded. The difficulty is the go-between.'

Ethne looked quickly at Durrance.

'The go-between?' she asked, and then she said: 'I think I begin to understand,' and pulled herself up abruptly. 'You mean the Arab who can come and go between Omdurman and the Egyptian frontier?'

'Yes. He is usually some Dervish pedlar or merchant trading with the tribes of the Soudan who slips into Wadi Halfa or Assouan or Suakin and undertakes the work. Of course his risk is great. He would have short shrift in Omdurman if his business were detected. So it is not to be wondered at that he shirks the danger at the last moment. As often as not, too, he is a rogue. You make your arrangements with him in Egypt, and hand him over the necessary money. In six months or a year he comes back alone, with a story of excuses. It was summer and the season unfavourable for an escape. Or the prisoners were more strictly guarded. Or he himself was suspected. And he needs more money. His tale may be true, and you give him more money and he comes back again, and again he comes back alone.'

Ethne nodded her head.

'Exactly.'

Durrance had unconsciously explained to her a point which till now she had not understood. She was quite sure that Harry Feversham aimed in some way at bringing help to Colonel Trench, but in what way his own capture was to serve that aim she could not determine. Now she understood; he was to be his own go-between, and her hopes drew strength from this piece of new knowledge. For it was likely that he had laid his plans with care. He would be very anxious that the second feather should come back to her. And if he could fetch Trench safely out of Omdurman, he would not himself remain behind.

Ethne was silent for a little while. They were sitting

on the terrace, and the sunset was red upon the water of the creek.

'Life would not be easy, I suppose, in the prison of Omdurman,' she said, and again she forced herself to indifference.

'Easy!' exclaimed Durrance; 'no, it would not be easy. A hovel crowded with Arabs, without light or air, and the roof perhaps two feet above your head, into which you were locked up from sundown to morning; very likely the prisoners would have to stand all night in that foul den, so closely packed would they be. Imagine it even here in England on an evening like this! Think what it would be on an August night in the Soudan! Especially if you had memories, say, of a place like this, to make the torture worse.'

Ethne looked out across that cool garden. At this very moment Harry Feversham might be struggling for breath in that dark and noisome hovel, dry of throat and fevered with the heat, with a vision before his eyes of the grass slopes of Ramelton and with the music of the Lennon River liquid in his ears.

'One would pray for death,' said Ethne slowly, 'unless——' She was on the point of adding 'unless one went there deliberately with a fixed thing to do,' but she cut the sentence short. Durrance carried it on:

'Unless there was a chance of escape,' he said. 'And there is a chance—if Feversham is in Omdurman.'

He was afraid that he had allowed himself to say too much about the horrors of the prison in Omdurman, and he added: 'Of course, what I have described to you is mere hearsay, and not to be trusted. We have no knowledge. Prisoners may not have such bad times as we think,' and thereupon he let the subject drop. Nor did Ethne mention it again. It occurred to her at times to wonder in what way Durrance had understood her abrupt disappearance from the drawing-room on the night when he had told her of his meeting with Harry Feversham. But he never referred to it himself, and she thought it wise to imitate his example. The noticeable change in his manner, the absence of that caution which had so distressed her, allayed her fears. It seemed that he had found for himself some perfectly simple and natural explanation. At times, too, she asked herself why Durrance had told her of that meeting in Wadi Halfa, and of Feversham's subsequent departure to the South. But for that she found an explanation—a strange explanation, perhaps, but it

was simple enough and satisfactory to her. She believed that the news was a message of which Durrance was only the instrument. It was meant for her ears, and for her comprehension alone, and Durrance was bound to convey it to her by the will of a power above him. His real reason she had not stayed to hear.

During the month of September, then, they kept up the pretence. Every morning when Durrance was in Devonshire he would come across the fields to Ethne at the Pool, and Mrs. Adair, watching them as they talked and laughed without a shadow of embarrassment or estrangement, grew more angry, and found it more difficult to hold her peace and let the pretence go on. It was a month of strain and tension to all three, and not one of them but experienced a great relief when Durrance visited his oculist in London. And those visits increased in number, and lengthened in duration. Even Ethne was grateful for them. She could throw off the mask for a little while; she had an opportunity to be tired; she had solitude wherein to gain strength to resume her high spirits upon Durrance's return. Then came hours when despair seized hold of her. 'Shall I be able to keep up the pretence when we are married, when we are always together?' she asked herself. But she thrust the question back unanswered; she dared not look forward lest even now her strength should fail her.

After the third visit Durrance said to her:

'Do you remember that I once mentioned a famous oculist at Wiesbaden? It seems advisable that I should go to him.'

'You are recommended to go?'

'Yes, and to go alone.'

Ethne looked up at him with a shrewd, quick glance.

'You think that I should be dull at Wiesbaden,' she said. 'There is no fear of that. I can rout out some relative to go with me.'

'No. It is on my own account,' answered Durrance. 'I shall perhaps have to go into a home. It is better to be quite quiet, and to see no one for a time.'

'You are sure?' Ethne asked. 'It would hurt me if I thought you proposed this plan because you felt I would be happier at Glenalla.'

'No, that is not the reason,' Durrance answered, and he answered quite truthfully. He felt it necessary for both of them that they should separate. He, no less than Ethne, suffered

under the tyranny of perpetual simulation. It was only because he knew how much store she set upon carrying out her resolve that two lives should not be spoilt because of her, that he was able to hinder himself from crying out that he knew.

'I am returning to London next week,' he added, 'and when I come back I shall be in a position to tell you whether I am to go to Wiesbaden or not.'

Durrance had reason to be glad that he had mentioned his plan before the arrival of Calder's telegram from Wadi Halfa. Ethne was unable to connect his departure from her with the receipt of any news about Feversham. The telegram came one afternoon, and Durrance took it across to The Pool in the evening and showed it to Ethne. There were only four words to the telegram :

'Feversham imprisoned at Omdurman.'

Durrance had moved away from Ethne's side as soon as he had given it to her, and had joined Mrs. Adair, who was reading a book in the drawing-room. He had folded up the telegram, besides, so that by the time Ethne had unfolded it and saw the words, she was alone upon the terrace. She remembered what Durrance had said to her about the prison, and her imagination enlarged upon his words. The quiet of a September evening was upon the fields, a light mist rose from the creek and crept over the garden bank across the lawn. Already the prison doors were shut in that hot country at the junction of the Niles. 'He was to pay for his fault ten times over then,' she cried in revolt against the disproportion. 'And the fault was his father's more than his own, and mine too. For neither of us understood.'

She blamed herself for the gift of that fourth feather. She leaned upon the stone balustrade with her eyes shut, wondering whether Harry would outlive this night, whether he was still alive to outlive it. The very coolness of the stones on which her hands pressed became the bitterest of reproaches.

'Something can now be done.'

Durrance was coming from the window of the drawing-room and spoke as he came to warn her of his approach. 'He was and is my friend, I cannot leave him there. I shall write to-night to Calder. Money will not be spared. He is my friend, Ethne. You will see. From Suakin or from Assouan something will be done.'

He put all the help to be offered to the credit of his own

friendship. Ethne was not to believe that he imagined she had any further interest in Harry Feversham.

She turned to him suddenly, almost interrupting him.

‘Major Castleton is dead?’ she said.

‘Castleton?’ he exclaimed. ‘There was a Castleton in Feversham’s regiment. Is that the man?’

‘Yes. He is dead?’

‘He was killed at Tamai.’

‘You are sure—quite sure?’

‘He was within the square of the Second Brigade on the edge of the great gully when Osman Digna’s men sprang out of the earth and broke through. I was in that square too. I saw Castleton killed.’

‘I am glad,’ said Ethne.

She spoke quite simply and distinctly. The first feather had been brought back by Captain Willoughby. It was just possible that Colonel Trench might bring back the second. Harry Feversham had succeeded once under great difficulties in the face of great peril. The peril was greater now, the difficulties more arduous to overcome; that she clearly understood. But she took the one success as an augury that another might follow it. Feversham would have laid his plans with care; he had money wherewith to carry them out; and besides she was a woman of strong faith. But she was relieved to know that the sender of the third feather could never be approached. Moreover she hated him, and there was an end of the matter.

Durrance was startled. He was a soldier of a type not so rare as the makers of war stories wish their readers to believe. Hector of Troy was his ancestor; he was neither hysterical in his language nor vindictive in his acts; he was not an elderly schoolboy with a taste for loud talk, but a quiet man who did his work without noise; who could be stern when occasion needed and of an unflinching severity; but whose nature was gentle and compassionate. And this barbaric utterance of Ethne Eustace he did not understand.

‘You disliked Major Castleton so much?’ he exclaimed.

‘I never knew him.’

‘Yet you are glad that he is dead?’

‘I am quite glad,’ said Ethne stubbornly.

She had made another slip when she spoke thus of Major Castleton, and Durrance did not pass it by unnoticed. He

remembered it and thought it over in his gun-room at Guessens. It added something to the explanation which he was building up of Harry Feversham's disgrace and disappearance. The story was gradually becoming clear to his sharpened wits. Captain Willoughby's visit and the token he had brought had given him the clue. A white feather could mean nothing but an accusation of cowardice. Durrance could not remember that he had ever detected any signs of cowardice in Harry Feversham, and the charge startled him perpetually into incredulity.

But the fact remained. Something had happened on the night of the ball at Lennon House, and from that date Harry had been an outcast. Suppose that a white feather had been forwarded to Lennon House, and had been opened in Ethne's presence? Or more than one white feather? Ethne had come back from her long talk with Willoughby holding that white feather as though there was nothing so precious in all the world.

So much Mrs. Adair had told him.

It followed then that the cowardice was atoned, or in one particular atoned. Ethne's recapture of her youth pointed inevitably to that conclusion. She treasured the feather because it was no longer a symbol of cowardice but a symbol of cowardice atoned.

But Harry Feversham had not returned, he still slunk in the world's byways. Willoughby, then, was not the only man who had brought the accusation, there were others—two others. One of the two Durrance had long since identified. When Durrance had suggested that Harry might be taken to Omdurman, Ethne had at once replied: 'Colonel Trench is in Omdurman.' She needed no explanation of Harry's disappearance from Wadi Halfa into the southern Soudan. It was deliberate, he had gone out to be captured, to be taken to Omdurman. Moreover, Ethne had spoken of the untrustworthiness of the go-between, and there again had helped Durrance in his conjectures. There was some obligation upon Feversham to come to Trench's help. Suppose that Feversham had laid his plans of rescue and had ventured out into the desert that he might be his own go-between. It followed that a second feather had been sent to Ramelton and that Trench had sent it.

To-night Durrance was able to join Major Castleton to Trench and Willoughby. Ethne's satisfaction at the death of a man whom she did not know could mean but the one thing. There

would be the same obligation resting upon Feversham with regard to Major Castleton if he lived. It seemed likely that a third feather had come to Lennon House, and that Major Castleton had sent it.

Durrance pondered over the solution of the problem, and more and more he found it plausible. There was one man who could have told him the truth and who had refused to tell it, who would no doubt still refuse to tell it. But that one man's help Durrance intended to enlist, and to this end he must come with the story pat upon his lips and no request for information.

'Yes,' he said, 'I think that after my next visit to London I can pay a visit to Lieutenant Sutch.'

(To be continued.)

